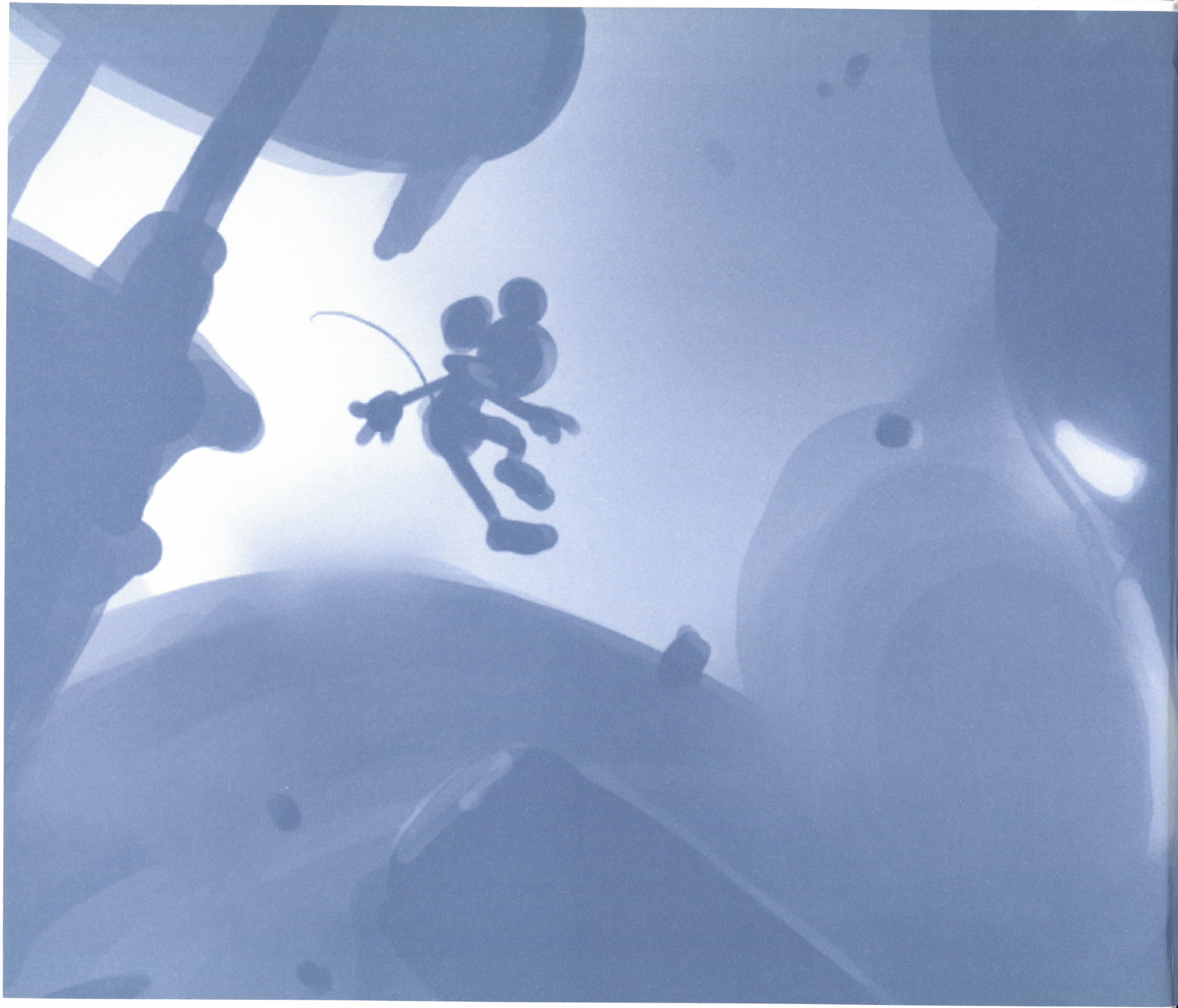
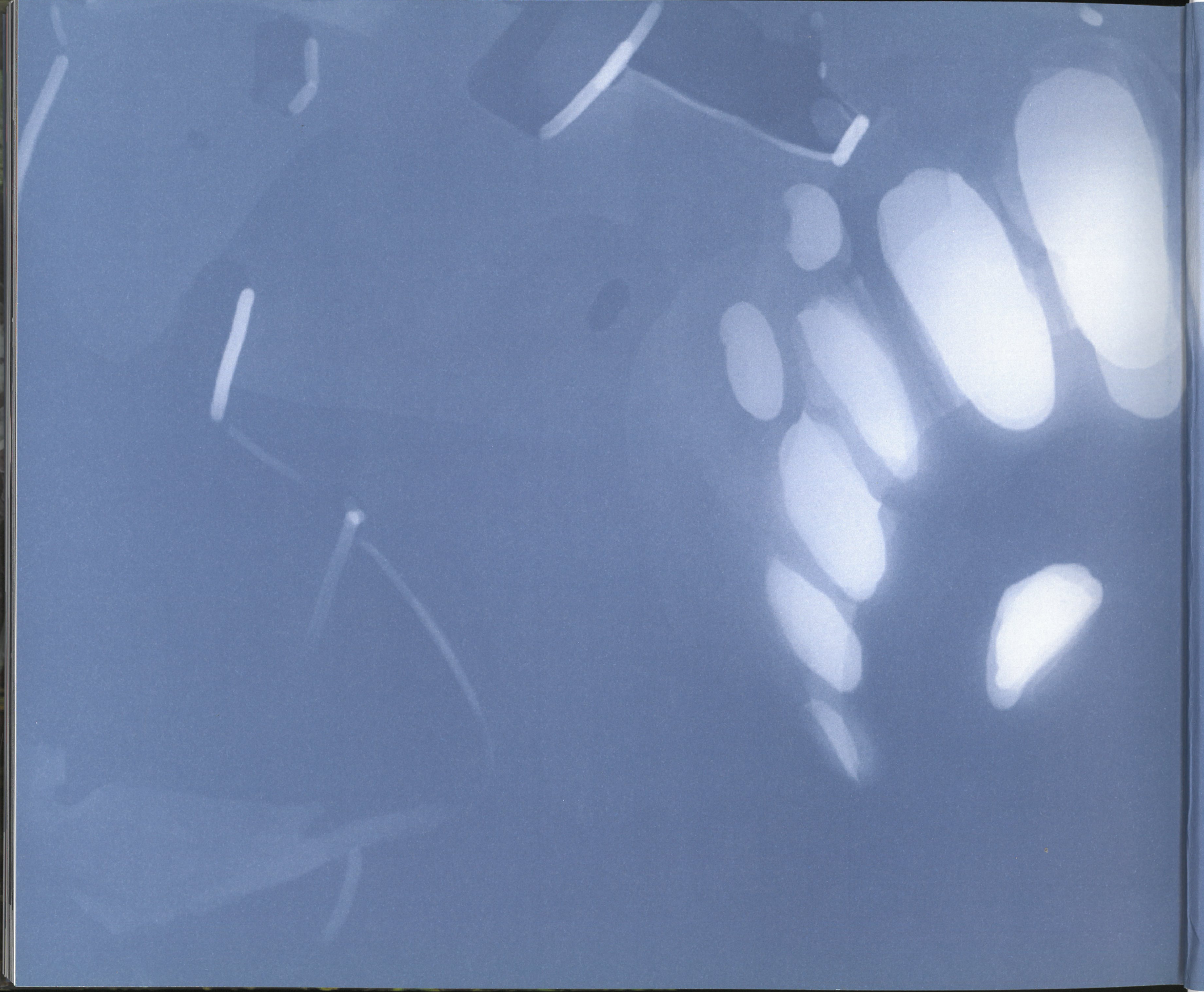










THE ART OF

Disney EPIC MICKEY

BY AUSTIN GROSSMAN

FOREWORD BY WARREN SPECTOR

a welcome book

Disney EDITIONS
new york



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Foreword

I'M ABOUT AS PROUD as I can be to be writing the foreword to *The Art of Disney Epic Mickey*. For starters, this is an opportunity to recognize the incredible work of a team of artists (and, of course, programmers and designers and audio folks) who embraced the challenge of making a game that honored eighty-plus years of Disney creativity. That could have been a daunting task, but it never fazed the Junction Point team.

Second, I never thought I'd have the opportunity to honor the work of the Disney artists and writers who have had such a profound impact on world culture, as well as me personally.

Third, and finally, I'm just tickled to have been a part of the creation of a game that deserves a book like this. (I've had my share of success as a game developer, but no one would look at the games I've worked on and say, "Yep. That's some mighty fine graphics." Well, not until now. I couldn't be more thrilled with the quality of the artwork in *The Art of Disney Epic Mickey*—from concept to finished product.)

From the start, I knew we had to achieve a higher level of graphical quality than I'd ever even dreamed of reaching before. I mean, when you think of the word "Disney," at least when I do, the first thing that comes to mind is amazing imagery, amazing style, amazing character design, and, of course, amazing animation!

Disney Epic Mickey is set in a world called Wasteland, a world where all of Disney's forgotten, rejected, replaced, and outdated creative efforts go when audiences, filmmakers, and Imagineers tire of them. That fictional setting gave the Junction Point team a free hand in drawing inspiration—specific inspiration—from *anything* and *everything* ever created at the Walt Disney Company.

Holy cow.

Talk about a mother lode of material! Talk about fun!

We were like kids in a candy shop, rummaging through the Disney Archives on the Studio Lot, through the prop archives, through the Imagineering Research Center and the Animation Research Library and the Disney Consumer Products "Lounge." We devoured every book we could get our hands on about Disney's history (and that's a lot of books, let me tell you!). We read comic books, watched movies, read Big Little Books, played with toys. You name it, we did it, Disney style.

We saw and even touched blueprints and color swatches for buildings at Disneyland's Main Street, U.S.A., models for film props (the *Nautilus* from *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea* was exquisite!), costumes out of cherished childhood memory (a Mexican soldier's uniform with Zorro's "Z" sliced through the jacket!), storyboards for films that were never made (*The Gremlins* created by Roald Dahl!), as well as strange and wonderful sketches for characters we thought we knew (countless *Alice in Wonderland* designs, a variety of Tinker

Bell possibilities, even rejected Woodys galore!).

All of that stuff brought Wasteland, our game world, to life for us in unexpected, even magical ways. The place became real—the product of not only Walt's respect, but also his company's respect for its creative heritage. And we were inspired and driven by a need to do justice to all of Disney's children—especially the forgotten and rejected ones.

We most definitely were inspired, but we were also challenged. We were challenged not only by the talent of the Disney artists who came before us, but also by the unique needs of the *Disney Epic Mickey* game.

A film or a theme park attraction can completely reflect the desires of its creators. If you're willing to put enough time and effort (and, I suppose, money!) into a job, you can make the picture in your head appear on-screen or in the park with near-perfect fidelity. The desires of the artist and the needs of the story are paramount.

In a game, it's a little different. These differences are what drove a lot of our creative decisions and constrained a lot of our artistic and aesthetic choices.

You see, in a game, visuals communicate things to players in ways that are unique to the medium. In our case, the look of a wall, or piece of wall . . . the look of an object . . . the look of a character was, in a very real sense, a *language*.

In *Disney Epic Mickey*, players can use "paint" to create toon things in the world or "thinner" to erase them. And there are some things that are immune to paint and thinner—these things we called "inert." Players needed to look at a wall or object and know instantly and without thinking too much whether that wall or object was "toon" or "inert." In other words, whether they can *erase* the wall or object (toon) or not (inert). Players needed to look at a character and know instantly and without thinking too much whether the character was friend or foe and, beyond that, whether it was a toon thing or an inert thing. And, just to complicate things a bit more, things that had been erased had to be *just barely* visible in the world, in a form we called "sketchy."

Whew! Imagine having to create a living and breathing world—a world faithful enough to its Disney roots to satisfy fans—where a wall or object or character could be partly or entirely toon, partly or entirely sketchy or partly or entirely inert! If we'd really stopped to think about what we were trying to do, graphically, we probably would have given up before we even started!

But at the end of the day, the talented artists at Junction Point, working in collaboration with artists, creative directors, character designers, and animators from all parts of the Disney organization, managed to create a look that worked. The end result incorporates elements from Disney storyboard art and concept art . . . from theme park attractions and feature films . . . from the earliest Oswald the Lucky Rabbit cartoon to classic Mickey Mouse short subjects to the sets of *Pirates of the Caribbean*. The end result is, I think, Disney's heritage brought to life in a new medium, respectful of the past but with both feet firmly pointed toward the future.

I like to think that, somewhere, the characters living in Wasteland are looking down on us and thinking, *Those guys did alright by us.* I certainly hope so—they deserve no less.

— Warren Spector

LEAD DESIGNER

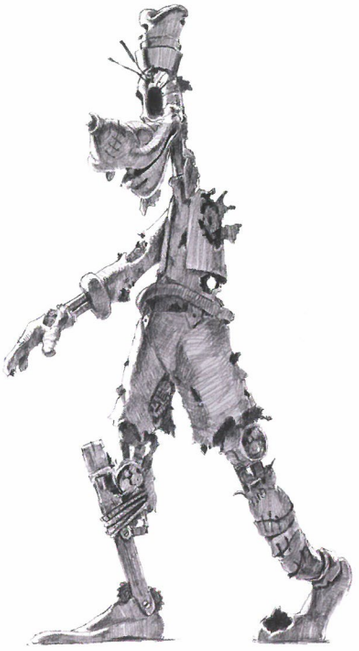



Introduction


PAINT
MICKEY MOUSE
64 OZ

In summer 2009, images started to filter out onto the

Internet from Junction Point Studios—lush, gorgeous, evocative, tantalizing pieces of concept art. In one piece, a fairy-tale castle stood atop an impossibly thin spire, silhouetted against an orange polluted sky, fragile and almost lost among towering industrial chimneys. Another showed a desolate beach where classic, black-and-white cartoon characters roamed around as if lost, while enormous, menacing patchwork animatronic creatures emerged from the surf. In the background, an enormous jug of paint thinner stood half-buried in the sand. A third was a nightmarish black-and-white sketch of a cyborg Goofy, one-armed, eyeless, and seemingly jury-rigged out of animatronic parts, old clothes, and scraps of lumber.



This is the first image from Disney Epic Mickey that I ever saw, and initially, I thought it was actually Goofy himself returning from the dead as a zombie. Thankfully, it was only a cyborg version of Goofy, but it was still shocking and convinced me that we were doing something amazing.

—**Stacey Moore,** *Senior Animator*

The buzz started immediately. Everyone knew that Warren Spector and Junction Point were making a Mickey Mouse game with Disney, code-named "Disney Epic Mickey," but few people expected anything this creative, this edgy, and this risky. The pictures showed a dark, dystopian approach to the classic Disney properties. Suddenly everyone—children, teens, grown-ups, gamers—was interested in a Mickey Mouse game.

Fans of Spector's previous work were already interested, even though he wasn't the most obvious pick to produce a next-generation Mickey Mouse game. He was at that point best known for *Deus Ex*, a first-person action-role-playing game set in a dark, futuristic world of conspiracies. The game had a loyal following, for its immersive world-building, deep simulation, and a story line that required players to make difficult, morally ambiguous choices.

OPPOSITE: The image of Beetleworx emerging from an ocean of deadly thinner to storm a beach of crushed celluloid captured so much of what I hoped the game would be and feel like: the combination of beauty and desolation; of black and white characters out of place in a cartoon world; of Mickey Mouse as a near-mythological creature. The mission this piece was designed to illustrate didn't make the final game, but the tone was right and I think the team pretty much nailed it.

—Warren Spector



Warren Spector

Over his career, Spector had taken risks by pushing the capabilities of the medium forward in each game. His hallmark was making immersive, story-driven games, worlds that let empowered players make meaningful choices. One of the goals of interactive storytelling is to give players agency in the world—to let them decide how they want to solve problems, where they want their character to take the story, and—fundamentally—who they want to be. Over two decades, he has helped shape video games into a more compelling, absorbing, emotional, and profound medium.

In 2005, Spector was pitching games to publishers, including Disney, looking for a deal that would let him and the Junction Point team start working on a next-generation game. They weren't typical Disney games, so he wasn't surprised when the room didn't seem interested. It turns out, though, that Disney was only waiting for him to finish so that they could pitch him on the idea of a video game that would reintroduce Mickey Mouse as an action hero to the world of video games.

Unbeknownst to them, Warren Spector was—semisecretly—a die-hard fan of Disney animation. He'd even done academic work on the subject in the course of getting his master's degree. And it wasn't even Warren's first cartoon-based game—at Steve Jackson, he and Greg Costikyan coauthored Toon, the now-classic cartoon role-playing system, which enabled players to inhabit in a world of cartoon physics and improvised comedy, where everyone is a funny animal and, despite the omnipresence

BELOW: A piece of concept art from the shores of the thinner ocean.

—Warren Spector

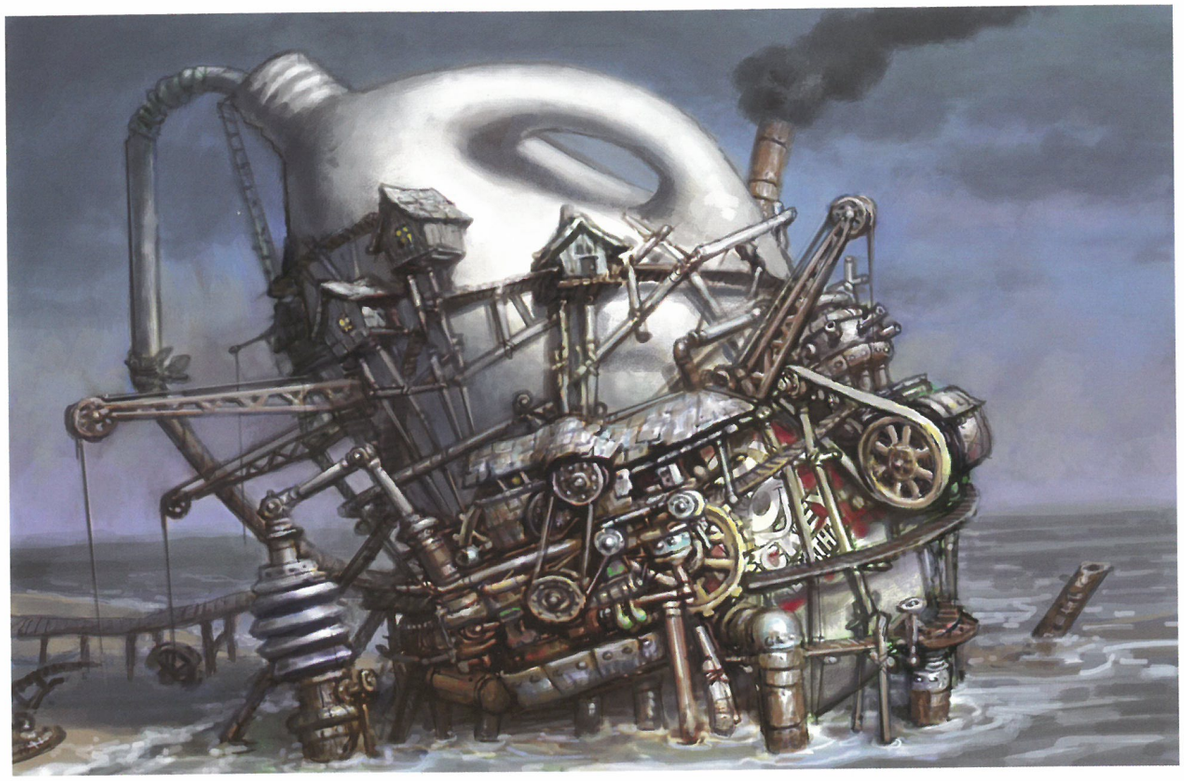




of ticking bombs, steamrollers, and anvils, no one ever gets killed.

Warren jumped at the chance. Disney supplied a few of the game's core elements—forgotten characters, Wasteland, and they were interested in seeing Oswald the Lucky Rabbit return. Spector saw there was a compelling emotional core there. He and a group of developers went to work, brainstorming game ideas and developing concept art. As Warren puts it, "They gave me an acorn; I was growing it into an oak tree." Together with Allen Varney, he coauthored the first design document, which Disney approved in April 2006.

ABOVE: Though a beautiful image, this early view of Dark Beauty Castle as seen from a distance was more *Deus Ex* than self-referentially cartoony *Disney Epic Mickey.* —WS



LEFT: We went through many variations of "The Jug"—the Thinner bottle that precipitated much of the game's action—before settling on a final version. Though this version didn't make the cut, we all thought of The Jug this way for quite some time. There was a whole mission around fixing the mechanism surrounding The Jug to drain the thinner ocean but that all got cut long before we shipped.

BELOW: An early take on the in-game model for Mickey Mouse and Wasteland.

OPPOSITE TOP: An early version of the animatronic Donald Duck.

OPPOSITE BOTTOM: One of the artists did a nice mood piece of Mean Street at night. Another artist added the words later. Apparently, in a team meeting I said all of those words in describing what I wanted the game to be and feel like. I was just jabbering but I'm glad someone was taking notes. Keeping all those words in mind really helped the team stay on target!

—Warren Spector

Warren Spector and the Junction Point team would make a Mickey Mouse game. It was a new kind of project for Warren. As a central character, Mickey's appeal skewed toward a younger audience rather than the teen and adult gamers who had liked *Deus Ex*. Earlier Spector games were built on a complex first-person perspective and gameplay that offered a wide range of possible actions. This would be a third-person game with more focused core mechanics, based on movement, platform-jumping, and the ability to paint and destroy terrain. Warren would bring to it a track record of creative gameplay, deeply simulated worlds, and dynamic, player-driven storytelling.

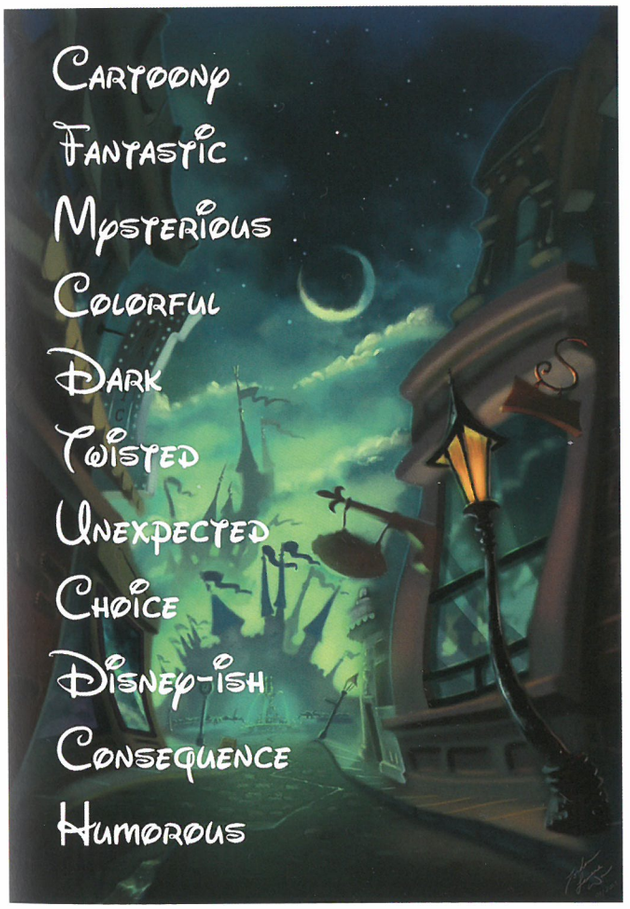


It was also a new thing for Mickey, who had appeared in games before but never a project with this much technical and creative ambition. Disney nerd and game visionary meets the most famous cartoon character in the

world—the collaboration would happen, but no one was quite sure what would come of it.

The artwork of *Disney Epic Mickey* is an inspired mash-up of Disney history, at the same time reverential and revolutionary. It represents a new generation of artists taking on the classic Disney characters they grew up on and producing both a new look and a brand-new story, building on the past while claiming it for a new generation and a new medium. It was a bold and scary expedition onto sacred ground, involving a large team of concept artists.





In-house artists Jordan Lamarre-Wan and Shawn Melchor are credited as concept artists and were responsible for a great many of the visionary images of game locations and characters. Rolf Mohr also had a crucial role early on in exploring the look of the world, as did many others, including freelance artists and Disney employees.

Even when the images are striking retakes on beloved images, they show a deep investment in Disney's heritage, its long history, and the mastery of craft it represents. The game is a treasure trove of Disney material from Disney's past, works from perennial favorites like *Beauty and the Beast*, but also from more obscure works, and hidden gems from the earliest days. Wherever possible, the game's artist worked from alternate or discarded versions of Disney properties. Warren's advice for the artists was, "For once, don't make anything up"—a challenge to keep all of the conceptual art on display in this book grounded in some part of the Disney history.


Mickey
Mouse





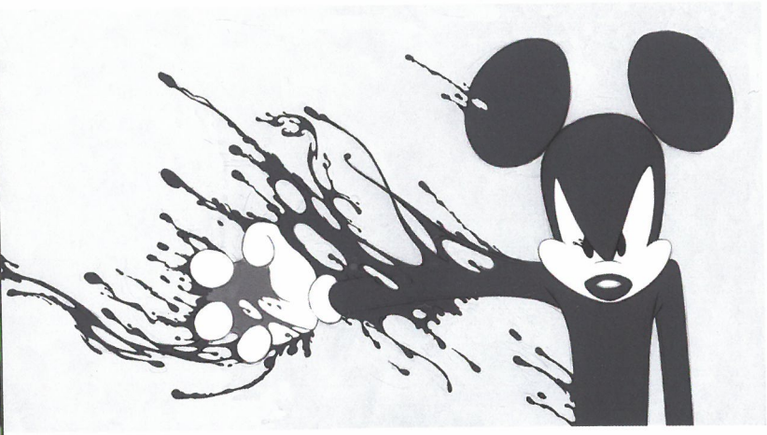


LEFT AND ABOVE: Our final Mickey Mouse model, with paintbrush, alongside an earlier version with more extreme "mask," extreme "drippiness" and paint (or is it thinner?) flowing from his hands. Though we toned down some of the characteristics evident in that sketch, the dynamic quality of the character survived concept and model changes in the shipping game.

—Warren Spector

Mickey is, hands down, the most recognizable cartoon character in the world—in fact he's one of the most recognizable things in the world. That doesn't mean it's easy to have him star in a video game—in some ways, it makes it harder. Everyone knows Mickey's image, so they'll know if the game-Mickey isn't quite right. At the same time, *Disney Epic Mickey* was an opportunity to show a classic version of the character in a new way.

Whatever we put out there had to be faithful to a great tradition, but also reintroduce Mickey in a way that will hook a new generation. The good news is that Mickey hasn't stood still over the years—his look has been changing ever since he first arrived. So the only question is, who will he be now? Who is our Mickey?

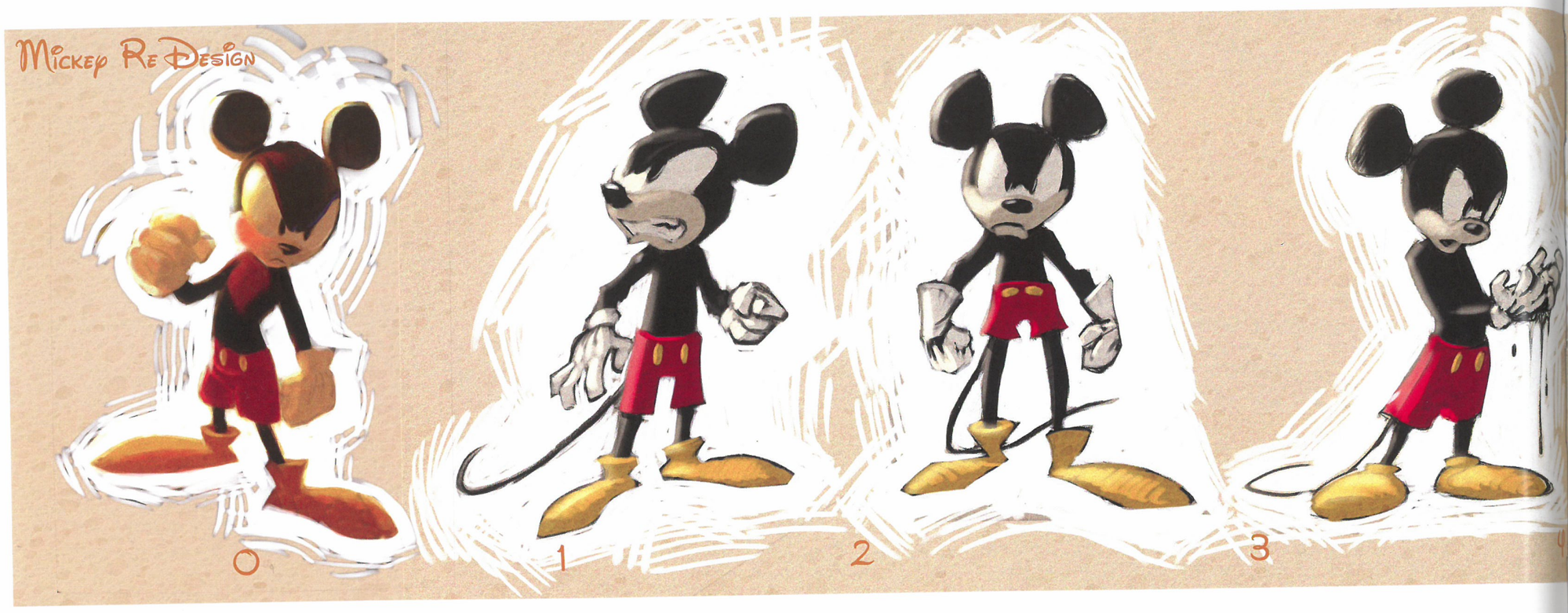


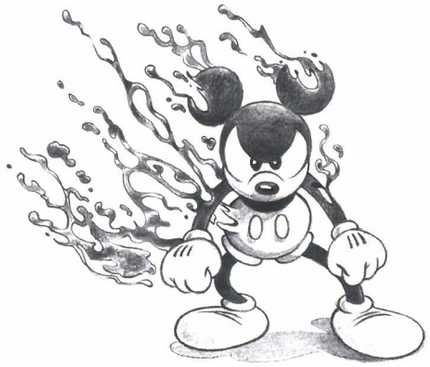
LEFT: Early in development, we thought about some fairly radical visual reinventions of the character. Cool as this image is, we decided we'd gone too far and pulled back a bit to a more traditional Mickey look for the shipping game.

OPPOSITE: The 2D cinematics style we came up with, working with an external partner called Powerhouse Animation, was spot-on as far as I'm concerned. The painterly style was unique, beautiful and "Disney-ish."

—WS







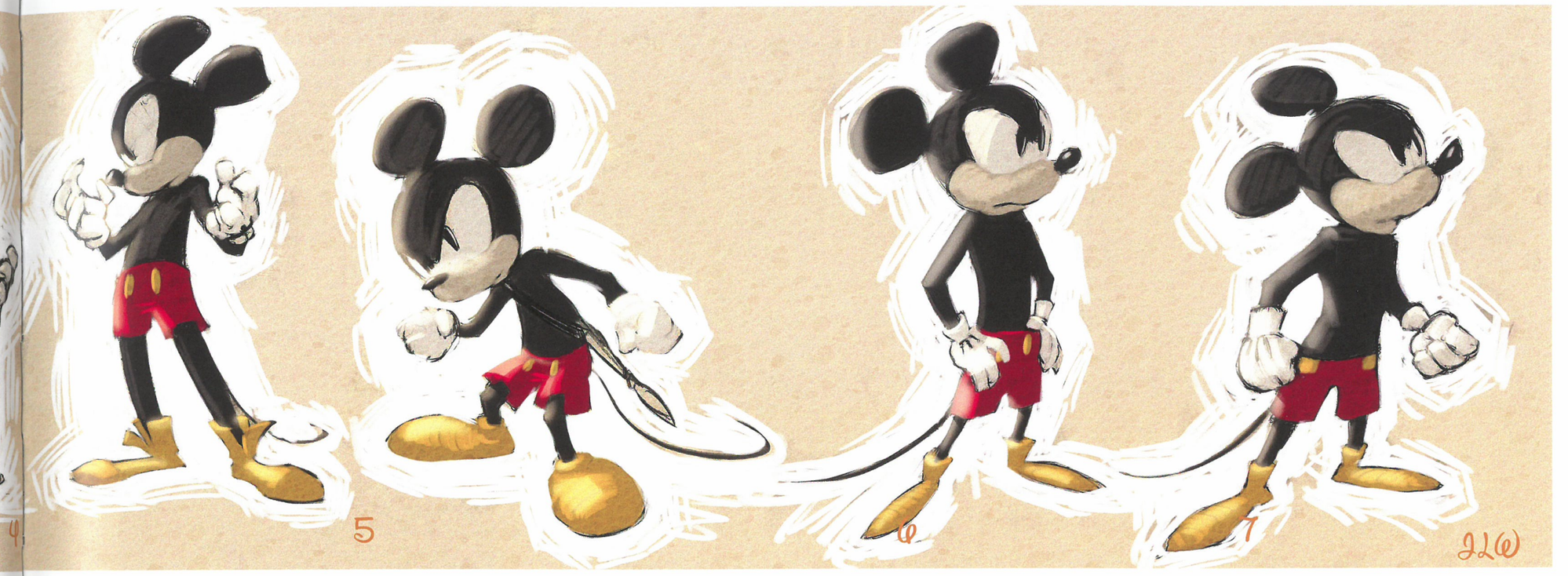
ABOVE: This sketch by veteran Disney artist Carson Van Osten was critically important. We needed Mickey to look like a hero you'd take seriously if you were a bad guy. We made dozens of specific changes to him between this sketch and the shipping game, but that seriousness of purpose survived.

—Warren Spector

Mickey in the 21st Century

The first worry was, would the same character that debuted in 1928 work for contemporary audiences, and in particular the audience that plays video games? According to common wisdom, the crucial ten-to-twenty-four-year-old demographic is only interested in hulking, blood-soaked killers, sexy vampires, and troubled antiheroes. Everyone says video games sell because they feature this summer's blockbuster film license, or because they offer players the biggest, most exaggeratedly destructive arsenal in history.

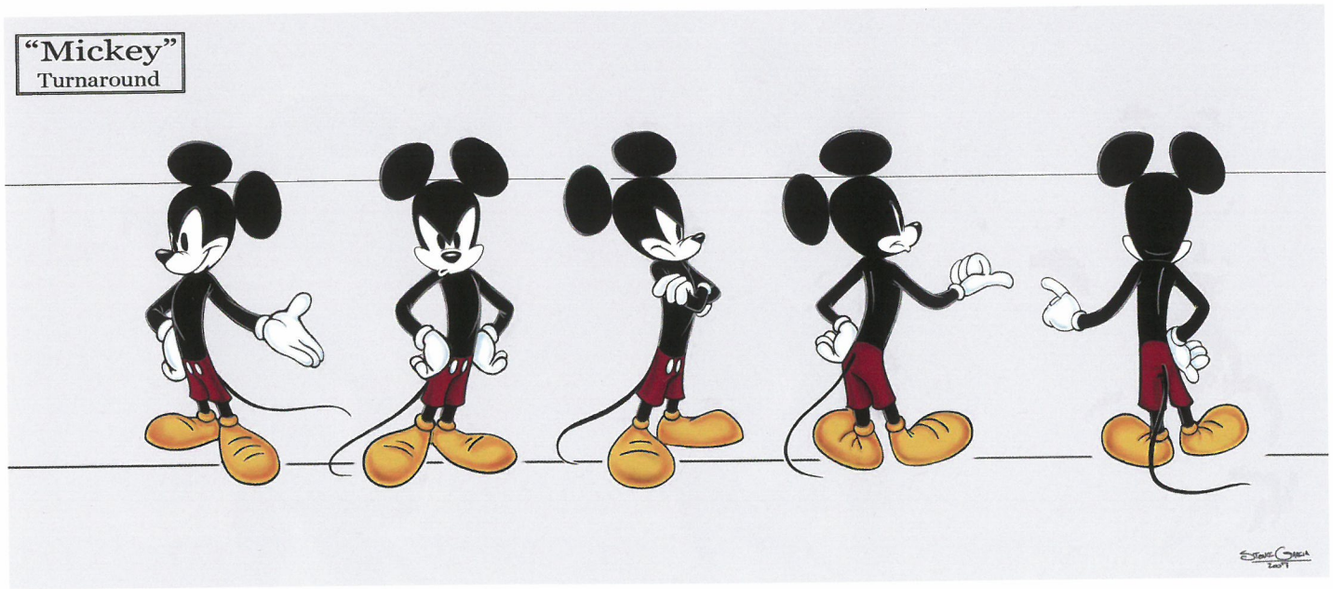
That's not Mickey. He doesn't communicate edginess or urban sophistication or megaviolence. He's not complicated, or mean, or troubled. He doesn't have Bugs Bunny's lean, wisecracking Groucho Marx edge or even Donald Duck's explosive anger. He's many things, but he's not about being



cool. He's about mischief and a sense of humor, and a sense that everything around him is something to play with. But there are more serious qualities: he perseveres no matter what the obstacles are, and has a basic instinct to be kind and helpful and, at need, heroic.

For a Mickey Mouse game to connect with audiences, the character design had to be exactly right. In a third-person, three-dimensional game the central character is on-screen every single moment—that character needs to show what the game is about. In preproduction, the developers experimented with reconceiving Mickey's look, to find ways to keep the essential Mickey-ness but express a leaner, darker side. This harmonized with the game design—in *Disney Epic Mickey*, the mouse is capable of both creating and erasing, and must always be choosing between them.

ABOVE: In making Mickey a more heroic figure than many people expected him to be, we toyed with the idea of changing his classic proportions—making him more of an adolescent, in a sense. Though this was a promising direction, it wasn't "Mickey enough," so we looked to other character elements to up his hero quotient. —WS



LEFT: This was one of my favorite character concepts. If we weren't making a Mickey Mouse game, I probably would have gone with this fellow as the player character. At the end of the day, though, we *were* making a Mickey Mouse game and this fellow, appealing as he was, just didn't "read" as Mickey Mouse. He had to go.

BELOW: We spent a lot of time trying to find just the right look for Mickey as the player chose to focus more on thinner-use—solving problems by erasing things. We initially thought we should change the character's look based on the player's choices but ultimately decided that Mickey had more visual integrity than that.

—Warren Spector



The character artists did an extraordinary job of taking the familiar design and exploring it, riffing on it to find new looks for Mickey, while keeping him utterly recognizable. One idea was to stretch him out, give him a longer torso in proportion to his body and head. This made him look both older and leaner, a teen or adult figure. There were Mickeys who dripped paint, who seemed to ooze liquid creative power from their pores (in early designs, Mickey's paint powers came from his hands rather than through the paintbrush). There were dark Mickeys with glowing eyes, angry Mickeys, warrior Mickeys.

Mickey is very challenging to animate. We were always searching to find that magical quality that is Mickey.

—Jorma Auburn,
Lead Artist/Animation

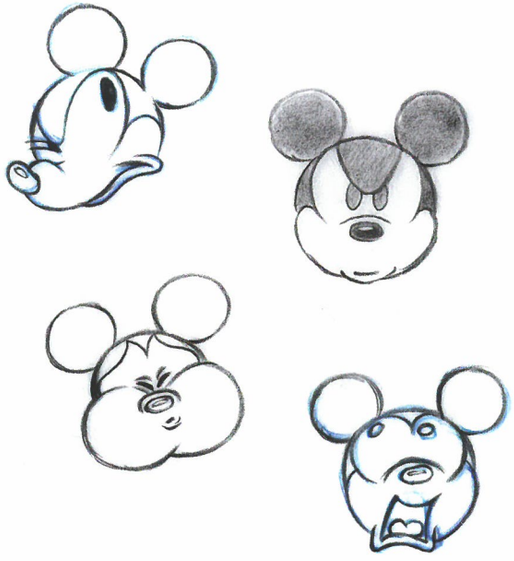
It was Mickey's fans who put Mickey on track—they almost universally rejected the radically redesigned Mickey. They knew Mickey from their childhoods, and this wasn't him. One quote from a focus group participant seemed definitive: "Don't mess with the Mouse."

Our creative team agreed with the comments. If you look back far enough, Mickey's character has everything we were looking for. The earliest cartoons showed a somewhat scrappier, more mischievous mouse. There's

I initially created a version of these drippy ears for internal studio use. Before I knew it, the image had made its way from Marketing to the desk of Bob Iger for approval. I couldn't believe it! If you look carefully, you can see this image is an earlier Modo software render of mine which was modified with some final touches: eventually the brow was raised, and the nose was removed.

—**Clay Hoffman,** *Senior Artist*





ABOVE: One of the most important things we had to prove to ourselves was that our subtly but significantly changed Mickey Mouse could act as well as the fellow we all knew from cartoons and comic books. Sketches like these helped convince us we were on the right track. —WS

an unmistakable anarchic glee there, as well as an inventive, indomitable persistence in the face of obstacles. Early art such as Carson Van Osten's animation prototypes showed how expressive the basic Mickey could really be.

Almost before the game was even conceived, environmental artist Clay Hoffman completed the game's iconic *Disney Epic Mickey* silhouette, a loose spatter of paint that conveyed the essence of the character while also giving edginess—slightly squared-off ears, dripping paint. The silhouette graphic was kept because it so powerfully communicated what the game was about—thoroughly modernized, yet still unmistakably, essentially, Mickey.

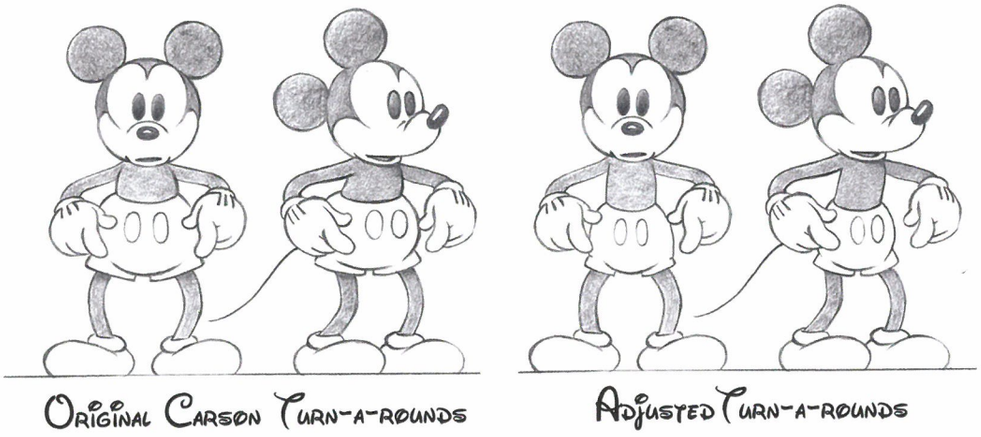
RIGHT: As we worked on our Mickey visuals, it became obvious that getting the character almost right was easy. Getting exactly him right was very hard, even for the most talented and experienced of artists. These illustrations fell into the "almost right" category.

BELOW: A late image shows Mickey facing the Phantom Blot swollen to enormous size; this image captures the recasting of Mickey as an epic hero, the mischievous mouse grown into a character that can face down a terrifying darkness.



OPPOSITE: This painterly image of Mickey captures some of our ambitions for the game: its range of color evokes a sense of the imaginative possibilities of the cartoon world, and it gives us a new look at Mickey as a character with shadows as well as brightness, and a deeply rooted courage and spirit of adventure.

—Warren Spector

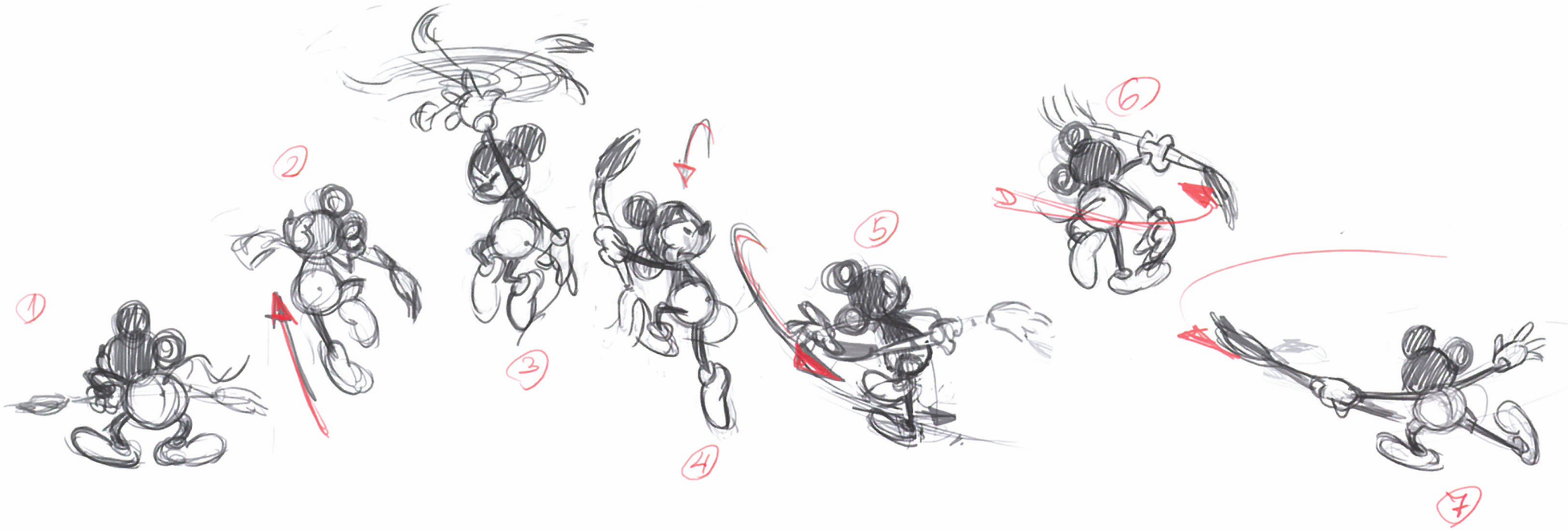


In-game, the art team went with a more traditional Mickey. Even then, there were decisions to make. The traditional Mickey has changed subtly over the years—in proportions, color, dress, and style; there's even been a rare, tailless Mickey. His limbs have varied in thickness—artists found that in the game, thinner limbs were hard to see, so they got thicker. Some Mickeys have looser limbs, some have defined joints—*Disney Epic Mickey* came down somewhere in the middle, with subtle elbows and knees.

In the past, Mickey's face color has varied between white and a pale pink tone—Junction Point's artists chose white for a more classic feel. His eyes have also changed over the years. The earliest Mickeys had simple black dots; later, his eyes became more realistic with pupils and whites, in keeping with the less stylized, more detailed animated world. *Disney Epic Mickey* has eyes with all-black pupils, which have tiny specular highlights to show they are very slightly raised from the surface of the eye, to make them more readable on the three-dimensional model.

The particular Mickey Mouse designed for *Disney Epic Mickey* is a unique creation, designed for a three-dimensional interactive world. At the same time, he has all the elements of the traditional Mickey Mouse—the classic, good-hearted trickster Mickey that has been there all along.



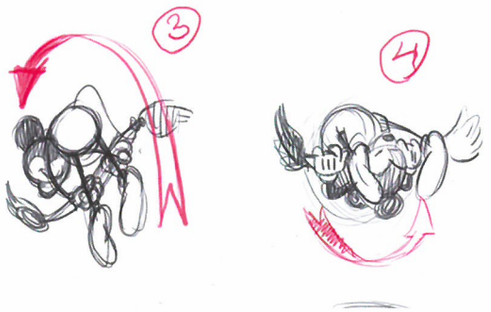


I love these drawings. They're so inspiring for an animator. It is not the final step in the idea process but is a great springboard for the final animation.

—**Jorma Auburn,**
Lead Artist/Animation

Mickey on the Wii™

Disney Epic Mickey presented a technical challenge. Mickey would be rendered in three dimensions. The camera shifts dynamically according to what the player is doing. Adding to the complication, Mickey moves and changes direction, and interacts with objects at the player's command. He had to respond with that turn-on-a-dime fluidity that players expect from a video game character, while keeping the movement style of the original Mickey. Everything had to be new, but it had to communicate the same character, that same essential personality. Mickey fans would know in an instant if it looked or felt wrong.



These worries were put to rest in early animation trials, where Mickey was shown walking, running, and generally goofing around, just as expressive as ever. In the ultimate test, *Disney Epic Mickey* sequences were shown right









alongside sequences from the classic cartoons. They were a perfect match, and Mickey on the Wii was a proven concept.

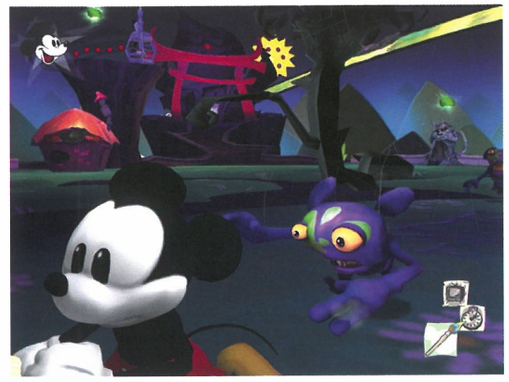
Originally, there was also the need to compete with the near-photo-realistic style of games on the XBox 360 and the PS3, graphical powerhouses that can render much faster and more detailed worlds than the Wii can. The solution was not to compete for realism, but rather to truly embrace the cartoon look of Mickey's world.

THIS PAGE: These were some of the first screenshots of the game released to the press. We had reached the point where there was so much curiosity about the project, we *had* to release something. In retrospect it's unfortunate all we had to show were some shots of an unlit test map!

—Warren Spector



Mickey and Game Design



ABOVE: This image was another early screenshot from our unlit test maps. It's interesting because it gave people a good look at the Spatter, one of our most appealing original creations, but also because it was one of the first times we showed Mickey's face. Part of our plan was to show him from behind to build mystery and intrigue potential players.

—Warren Spector

It's a hallmark of Warren Spector's games that they offer players a chance to express themselves.

Junction Point's unofficial motto is "playstyle matters." Players aren't locked into one kind of character or one style of play—they can be reckless or careful, or generous, or sneaky, or gleefully destructive. They can make these decisions because they're offered a story that offers them multiple ways forward, set in a flexible, dynamic world that allows different strategies, even creative and original solutions to in-game problems. But the way they play has consequences—the choices they make define who they are in the world, and the world reacts accordingly. The result is a game that makes players active partners in creating the game's story.

So not only would *Disney Epic Mickey* let you play as Mickey, but it would let you decide which Mickey you wanted to be. There's only ever been one Mickey Mouse, but there are many sides to him. There's the fearless fairy-tale hero of *Brave Little Tailor*; the mischievous troublemaker of "The Sorcerer's Apprentice"; the gleeful anarchist of *Thru the Mirror*. Throughout the game, players can decide whether to accomplish goals by repairing or wrecking the place; help a passerby, or go after the big goal, or stay and explore the local mysteries.



LEFT: This image was another attempt to change Mickey's visuals based on the player's choices. Cool as this image was, it didn't fit our ultimate goals and didn't make the final game.

OPPOSITE: If anyone had any doubt a little mouse could play the part of an epic hero, images like this one, from our 2D cinematics, put that concern to rest in a hurry!

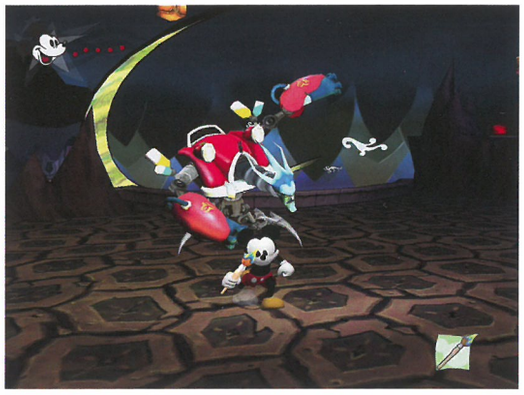
—WS



When we came up with this image, we were faced with the challenge of visually representing the different ideas from Warren's vision in an iconic picture. Some have said they have seen Oswald in this picture—can you find him?

—**Jordan Lamarre-Wan,** *Associate Concept Artist*


The Story



ABOVE: An early look at one of the Mad Doctor's Beetleworx creations. Though this image is from an unlit test map, it shows how threatening the Beetleworx could be and how serious a threat Mickey—and the player—would face in the game.

—Warren Spector

Because Junction Point was introducing Mickey to a new generation, this would be a new story about Mickey Mouse. The Mouse has been in hundreds of films, but relatively few have been very long—even *Fantasia* only featured Mickey in a shorter segment, "The Sorcerer's Apprentice." By contrast, *Disney Epic Mickey* can take ten or twenty hours to play through. Mickey would have to have a real character arc, a substantive story, but maintain that lightness and playfulness that is part of his colossal appeal.

The idea of an epic story is one that's not just about the central character, but also the fate of a whole people or nation. *Disney Epic Mickey* has that feel—Mickey is the hero whose actions matter for all the characters that depend on him and look up to him.

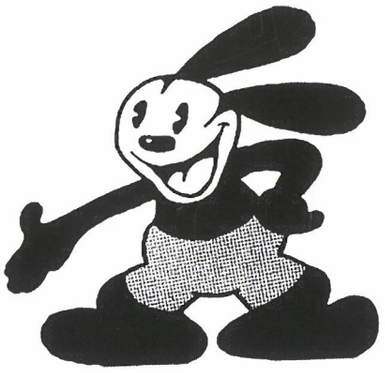
Mickey's long stories have also been cartoon "takes" on other stories, like *The Three Musketeers* or a fairy tale—borrowed stories. Instead, *Disney Epic Mickey* is part of a whole mythology of how a cartoon universe, how Mickey's life works, and why he's important. And it all begins with the strange place known as Wasteland.

The original concept of a microcosm located inside a real-world physical object (the Dumpster) set the tone for early development where actual objects became the building blocks of reconstruction.

—Rob Kovach,
Lead Technical Artist



What Is Wasteland?



ABOVE: An early advertising image of Oswald from his all-too-brief career as a Disney cartoon star. His pre-Wasteland attitude shines through here. —WS

There was a key question at the heart of the *Disney Epic Mickey* world: Where do the forgotten cartoon characters go when no one remembers them? When they no longer have the love of audiences, when they no longer act on the bright screen in front of millions? The answer is—Wasteland.

Wasteland was created by Yen Sid, the powerful, mysterious wizard from "The Sorcerer's Apprentice" (also "Disney" spelled backwards), as a home for the forgotten cartoon characters.

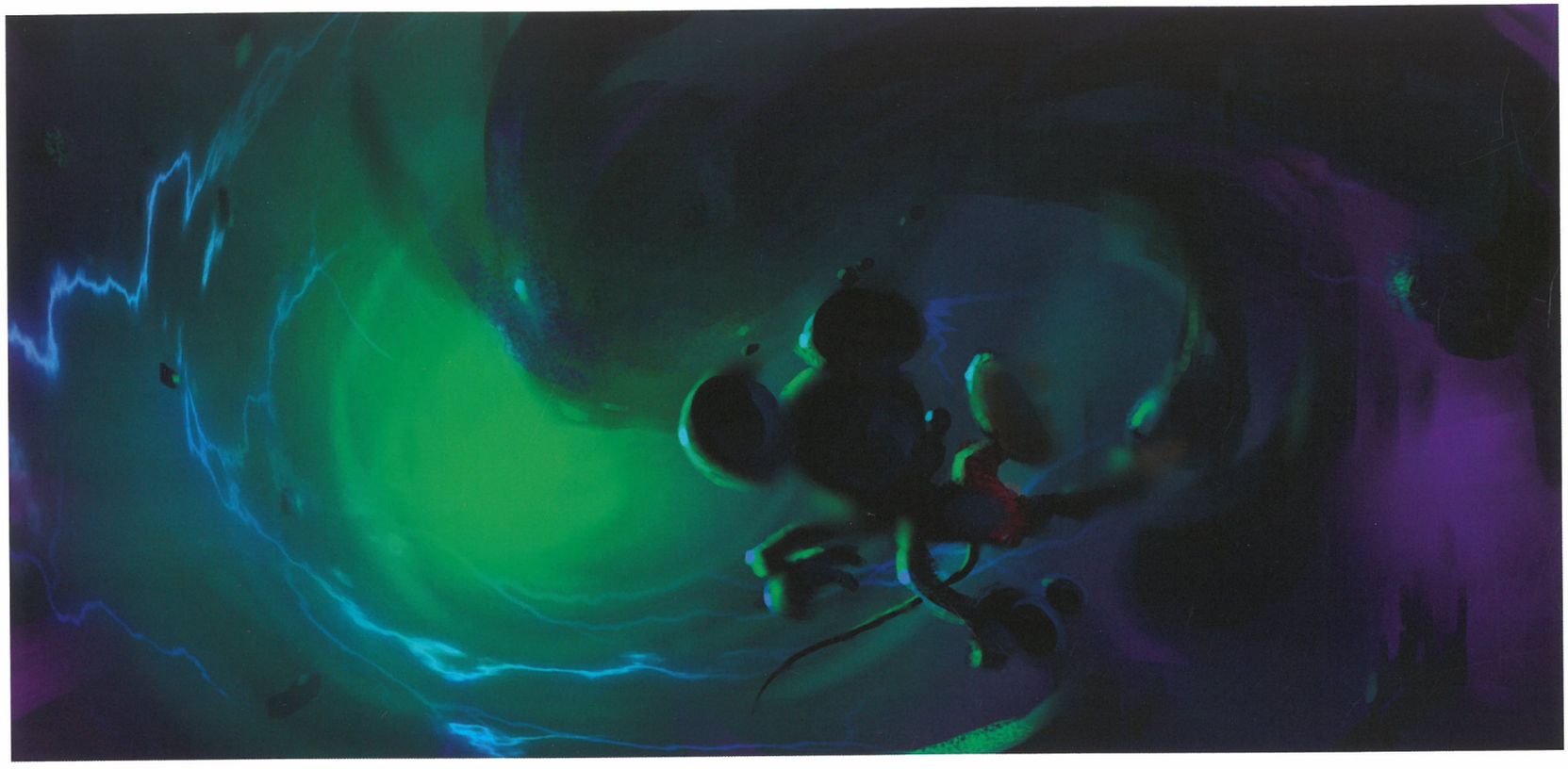
Wasteland is the world of castoffs, characters forgotten by the audience, or left half-finished on the drawing board, or just those who nobody ever liked very much. Some, such as Oswald the Lucky Rabbit; the Mad Doctor; Horace Horsecollar and Clarabelle Cow; and, most of all, the Phantom Blot, were just replaced by later versions of themselves, reintroduced with sound or Technicolor. It's the domain of abandoned amusement-park rides and broken, discarded animatronic exhibits. In short, anything from the world of Disney that no one wants anymore.

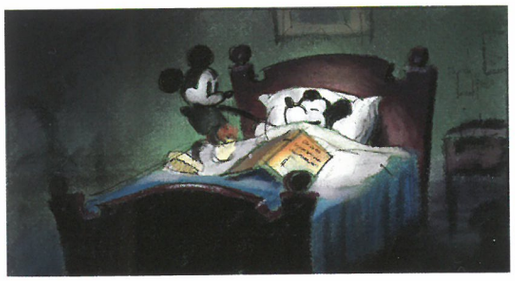


ABOVE: We always tried to be true to the Disney source material that inspired us. Here's a classic image of the Sorcerer from *Fantasia*. The resemblance to the version in our game is apparent. —Warren Spector

The exact design of Wasteland evolved as Junction Point developed it. One early incarnation envisioned it structured vertically like Dante's Inferno, with Mickey meeting different characters as he descended. Another imagined it as a giant metal dumpster located behind Sleeping Beauty's castle in Anaheim's Disneyland.

The look of Wasteland is one of *Disney Epic Mickey*'s most expressive elements. Just looking at the world these characters built immediately tells us who they are, how they feel about where they are, their deepest regrets and hope for the future. They never stopped dreaming of the bright cartoon world that left them behind, and hoping for a return. It's perhaps the saddest possible version of the Happiest Place on Earth.





TOP: Capturing the solid but not-solid enormity of the Blot took some time. We wanted him to be a force of nature, as threatening as a storm and as seemingly unstoppable. These qualities are expertly captured in this image.

ABOVE: Our game starts off with a re-creation of the opening of a real Mickey Mouse cartoon—*Thru the Mirror*. This image, from that cartoon, provided a model the team emulated to near perfection.

—WS

Mickey and Wasteland

Life was tough enough in Wasteland, and tragically, Mickey manages to make it worse. As we see in the game's introduction inside the wizard's castle, Mickey knocks over a jug of thinner, drenching Wasteland. For Mickey, it was just a moment's carelessness, but for Wastelanders, it was one of the defining events in their history. Their world was devastated, transformed in an instant from a continent to a group of islands in a sea of corrosive thinner. This adds another element to Wasteland's look. It's been ruined, scarred, and half-dissolved in many places. He also creates the Blot, a sentient mixture of the magic paint and thinner substances, who becomes an unstoppable, marauding tyrant.

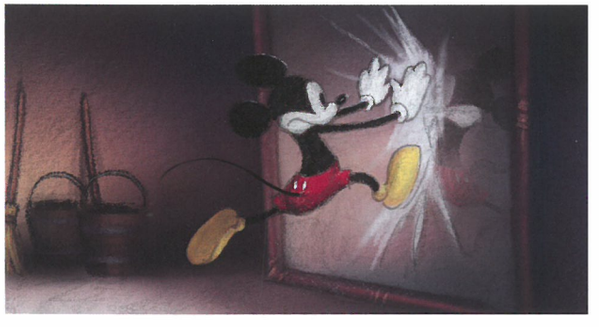












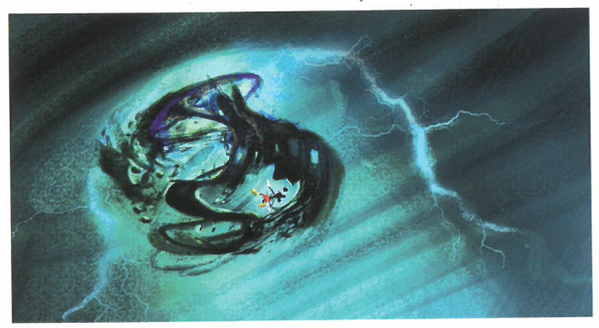


THIS SPREAD: Though we began our introductory cinematic with inspiration from the cartoon *Thru the Mirror*, we wanted to break out of that and get to another source of inspiration—*Fantasia*—before opening out still further into our wholly original world. These storyboard images show how we took players through that transition.

—Warren Spector

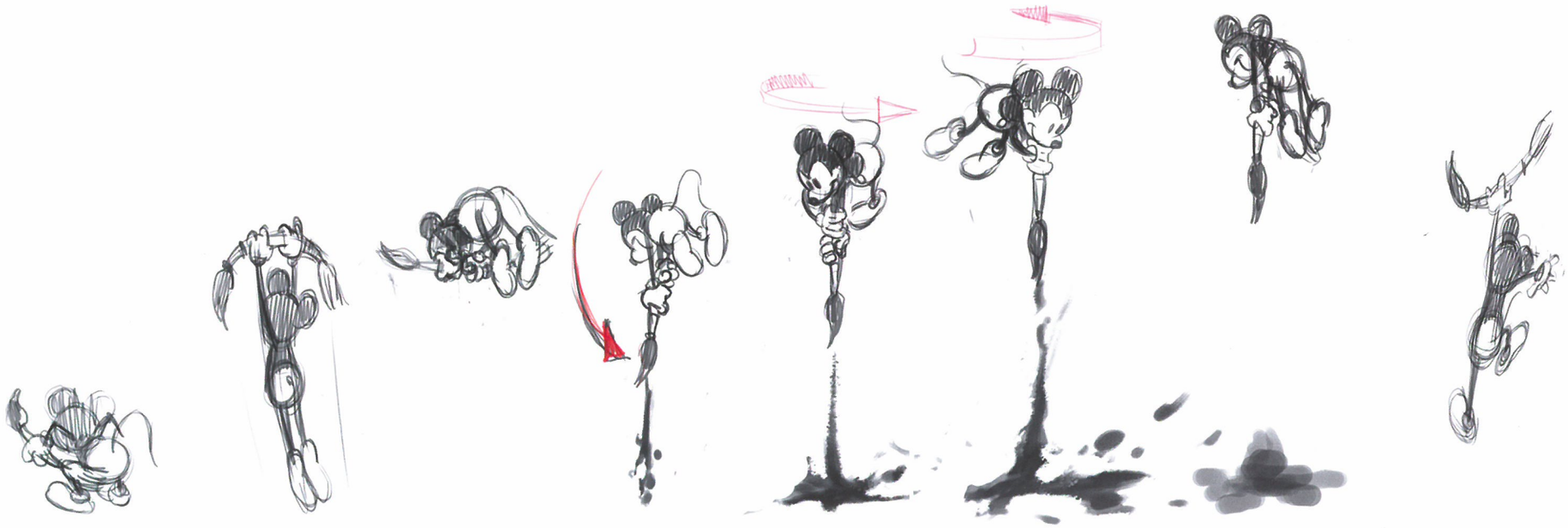
Not realizing he has devastated Wasteland, Mickey escapes from the castle, and finds fame and fortune. It's a moment that shows another side of Mickey's character. Mickey can be generous, friendly, and even heroic; but he's also mischievous, curious, and playful. Not terrible things, but in ways that verge over into carelessness and irresponsibility. It's the side of Mickey that comes out so clearly in *Fantasia*'s "The Sorcerer's Apprentice"—playful, inventive, but maybe not thinking through the consequences for himself and others.

As the game begins, the Phantom Blot has pulled Mickey into Wasteland. Now, Mickey can't ignore what he's done. When he learns Wasteland's history and sees the damage he's done firsthand, he sees sides of himself he never knew before: in the person of Oswald, the half brother he left behind; in the Blot, his own creation, who personifies the worst kind of hungry ambition; and in Wasteland itself, the forgotten country that owes so many of its troubles to his mischief.





For Mickey, this is a chance to learn what makes a really great cartoon character, somebody worthy of the love and acclaim he's gotten. You have to have the heart of a true cartoon character to escape Wasteland. Mickey has a good heart, but perhaps he never appreciated what he had, or thought about the characters that came before him. For the first time, this celebrity has to ask himself, what kind of character deserves the love of the world? What makes a true hero?



Paint & Thinner

What's the basis of cartoon reality? Paint, naturally, and its antimatter opposite, paint thinner. Much of Mickey's power in the world comes from his ability to control the basic elements of cartoon reality, thanks to the magic brush. In Wasteland, there are three forms of matter—painted cartoons, thinned-out forms, and inert matter, which is so drained of life it can't be restored.

OPPOSITE: The Wasteland version of Sleeping Beauty's Castle had to call to mind the original and hint at its faded beauty and grandeur. This image was one of the first that looked like a true Disney castle gone horribly wrong. —WS

Paint is the vital essence of cartoon life. Every cartoon person or thing is made of paint, which gives everything its color, life, substance, and energy. Anything you can imagine can be painted in the cartoon world—it literally harnesses the power of imagination. We first encounter the substance as Yen Sid is creating Wasteland itself. Naturally, Mickey can't resist messing around with it. And—naturally—it all goes terribly wrong.

ABOVE: The dynamism of Mickey and the visual appeal and power of his paintbrush became apparent in images like these. Great inspiration for the animators, too!

—Warren Spector

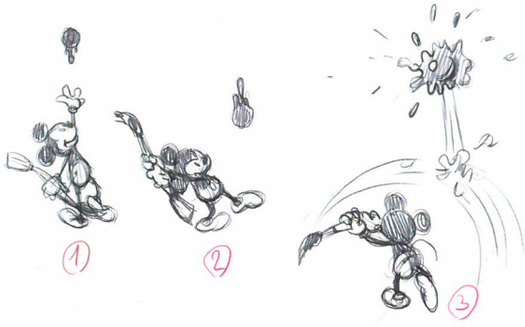






ABOVE: Depicting the Wasteland as it is during the game was hard enough but we needed to know how it looked *before* the thinner disaster, which helped us provide players with hints of what the world had once been like. —WS

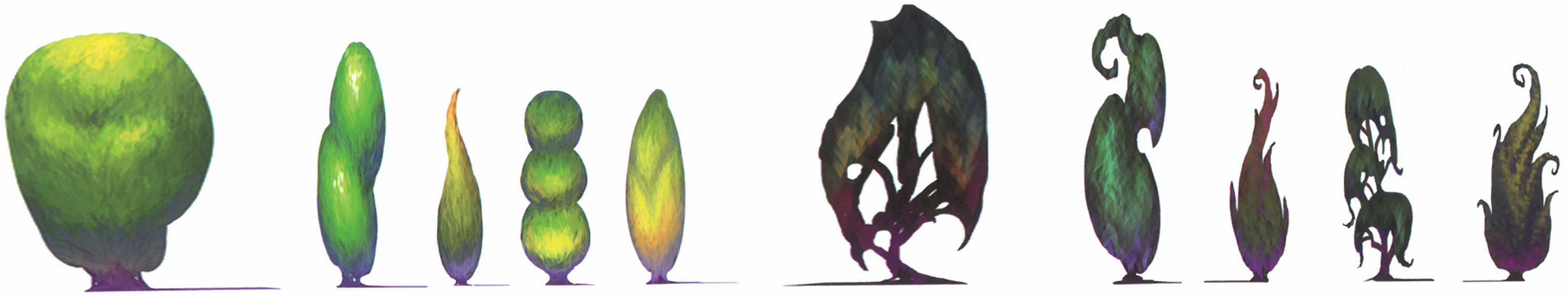
Thinner erases painted objects. Artists and animators use it to fix mistakes, of course, but in the cartoon world this makes it terrifying stuff, cartoon antimatter. It removes the paint from anything, leaving a ghostly thinned remnant where the object or character stood.



ABOVE: We tried just about everything when it came to Mickey and the ways he could wield his paintbrush.

—Warren Spector

Mickey's ability to manipulate paint and thinner is a core element of gameplay, but the idea of allowing players to freely create and destroy terrain was a pretty frightening one. From a technical perspective, it meant the Wii would simply have to keep track of a lot of information about the state of the world; it would be hard to take rendering shortcuts, since one couldn't even say for sure what would be visible from any given perspective. And from a game design perspective, it posed awkward questions—what would prevent players from simply thinning their way across the world to their goals? Or building bridges anywhere? Or thinning the whole world out?



Ultimately there had to be limits on what you could do. Paint and thinner aren't unlimited resources. There is a finite supply, which means players have to think and decide how to use what they have. A category of terrain called inert was created, a substance impervious to paint and thinner, which forms a bedrock for the world.

The creative team also needed a clear visual language to show players the three kinds of matter in the world—painted, thinned, and inert—something





TOP AND ABOVE: As in all things Wasteland, we needed the "before" and "after" versions of everything—*everything*—in the world. Here are trees and Haunted Mansion, as they once were, and then as they appear in the game.

LEFT: Cartoon characters live in cartoon houses. The Wasteland version of Toontown, called "OsTown" featured structures like this one, inspired by real Disney park buildings but a little melted!

—WS





ABOVE: We had to create a world that was part painted and cartoony and colorful, part inert, sad and dark, and yet all the pieces had to fit together in a coherent whole. Stiff challenge but the team was more than up to the challenge.

OPPOSITE: Perhaps the biggest challenge we faced in crafting our environments was communicating to players which parts of the world were painted, which were inert and which were erased. And it all had to look like Disneyland! This image was an early attempt at that, when "inert" stuff was metallic—an approach we junked because it wasn't clear enough or instantly readable.

—WS

they could see and immediately grasp the nature of these all-important aspects of the world, and to avoid frustration when players tried to thin out inert stuff.

From this imperative, artists derived the loopy, patchy look of Wasteland. Painted matter is colorful and slightly puffy-looking; thinned matter is transparent; and inert matter is blue-gray, stony, and crumbly. (In early versions, inert stuff was denoted by a shiny metallic sheen, but developers realized that players would have to be moving to be sure they were seeing reflective surfaces.) Every part of Wasteland tells the story of the thinner disaster Mickey caused.

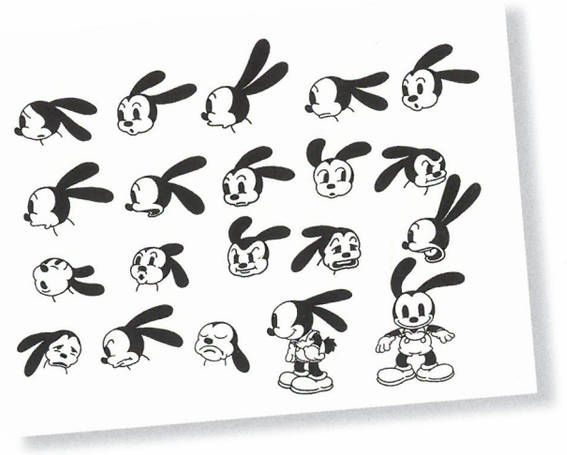
ABOVE: The Swiss Family Robinson treehouse may be gone from the Disney theme parks but it lives on in Wasteland. Here's a concept image of our version, found in VentureLand.

—Warren Spector


DISNEY
MARKET HOUSE
MARKET HOUSE



Oswald
the Lucky Rabbit



ABOVE: A model sheet showing Oswald in his post-Disney days as part of the Walter Lantz stable of cartoon characters.

BELOW: Oswald in all his in-game glory!

OPPOSITE: Oswald showing how cartoony he can be, removing his tail and using it as a dust mop. (He's cleaning off a post-Disney-era Oswald toy, by the way, an anachronism that slipped into the game unintentionally!)

—Warren Spector

If there's a character who personifies the story of Wasteland, it's Oswald the Lucky Rabbit, who is one of the great, forgotten might-have-beens of animation history.

Oswald the Lucky Rabbit was one of Walt Disney's first animated creations, in 1927. He starred in early, now classic animated shorts like *Trolley Troubles* (1927), *Oh, What a Knight* (1928), and many others.

He had all the ingredients of Mickey's colossal success. Despite their difference in species, you can see the unmistakable family resemblance between Oswald and Mickey—their proportions, clothing, coloring, and the shapes of their faces, the mercurial moods, and the rhythmic walk that's almost a dance. Oswald had the same whimsical sense of fun, his unstoppable scrappy Quixotic drive, to never give up in the face of obstacles, no matter how absurd or arbitrary his goal, no matter how hilariously events spun out of control.



Junction Point's visual design for Oswald paralleled the path they took with Mickey. They tried taller, thinner Oswalds, dark villainous Oswalds, and furious Oswalds. And as with Mickey, the final success came with bringing Oswald back to his roots.

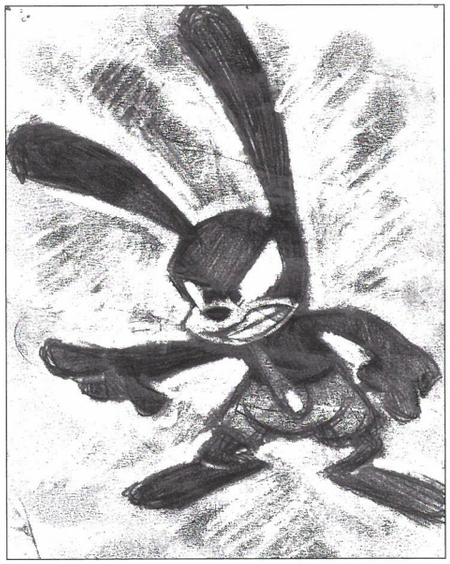
There are some differences even among half brothers. Oswald is a little stockier, with thicker limbs and a rounder body. And of course, he's a rabbit, which gives him long, wonderfully expressive ears—they quiver, point, droop, and stick out in all directions depending, on his mood.

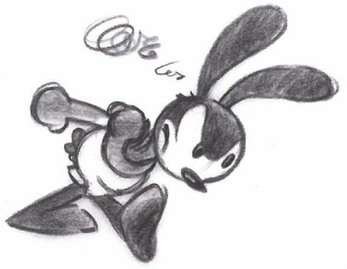
RIGHT: Early in development we tried giving Mickey Mouse more adolescent proportions. If we did *that*, it seemed logical to give his half-brother, Oswald, similarly changed proportions. As appealing as this version of Oswald was, when Mickey reverted to his classical size, so did Oswald.

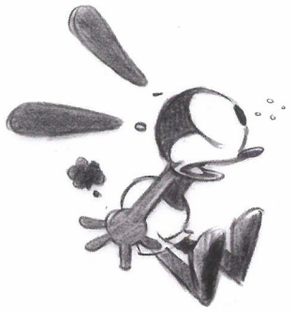
BELOW: One of the earliest images of Oswald, done by the Disney intern group that conceived the idea of bringing Oswald back as a game character. We didn't end up going as angry as this little guy.

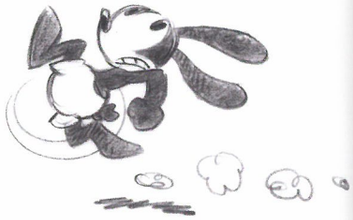
—Warren Spector











What went wrong for Oswald? His downfall was a simple legal fact—Disney and Universal parted ways, and Universal retained the rights to the Oswald character. Oswald continued on without Disney, but somehow the magic just wasn't there. His audience dwindled, and despite occasional appearances as late as the 1950s, he never became the star he could have been.

Meanwhile, Walt Disney did the only thing he could, squared his shoulders and went back to the drawing board. In doing so, he created Mickey Mouse, who became one of the biggest stars in the world. Mickey gave joy to millions of fans and earned their love.

When Oswald was forgotten, he fell into Wasteland, its first and perhaps greatest citizen. He and the Mad Doctor worked to create a world that could make up for the one they lost. Whenever a new character or object or concept sketch fell into Wasteland, he tried to find a place for it. Even though he'd never seen the Magic Kingdom, he did a pretty good job—there was a pirate

TOP RIGHT: Three images that capture Oswald's personality and spirit. Detachable limbs and ears became a staple of his behavior and his feistiness a critical element of his character. —WS

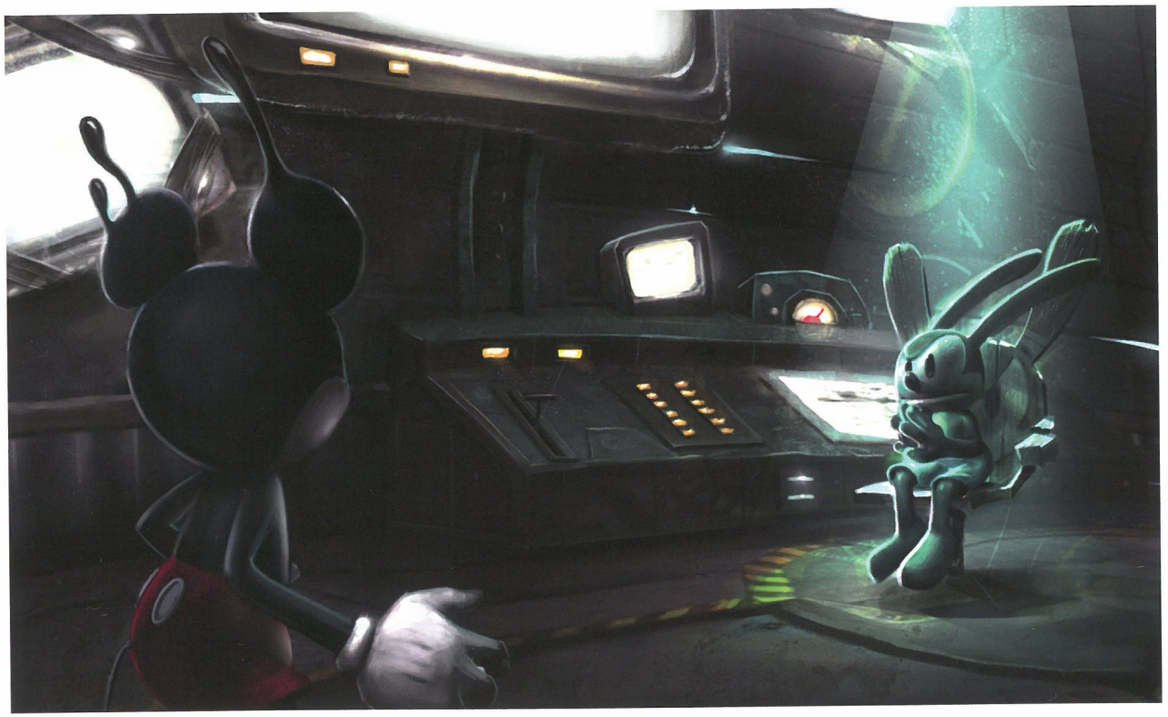
land, a haunted house, and a fairy-tale castle, just like in the original. He built Mean Street to replace Main Street, U.S.A., and put his image in place of Mickey's everywhere.

In time, Oswald became a hero to Wastelanders, until disaster struck again. Wasteland was devastated by spilled paint thinner, and terrorized by the Phantom Blot. Worst of all, his beloved girlfriend, Ortensia, a cat, was caught in the thinner wave and rendered inert. And it was all the fault of . . . Mickey, again. Oswald fought against the Phantom Blot, but was defeated.

BELOW: Oswald, about as angry and thoughtful as he gets, in a shot culled from one of our 2D cinematics where Mickey and Oswald meet for the first time. —WS







Mickey and Oswald are very similar personalities but where Mickey matured Oswald never did. So he is Mickey dialed up to 11. They are brothers after all.

—**Jorma Auburn,**
Lead Artist/Animation



By the time Mickey meets him, he has withdrawn from the world, demoralized, waiting in Mickeyjunk Mountain, his monumental work of Mickey resentment. He watched over the years as Mickey found the fame and success that could have been his.

When Mickey arrives in person, he's forced to confront the one person who has resented him for more than eighty years. As the story comes to its climax, Oswald has a chance to steal Mickey's heart and take it for himself. He has to decide whether to take his one chance to escape Wasteland or take the path of a real hero. It's the choice that gives him the chance to redefine himself.

It should be noted that Oswald's real-world history has a happy ending. In 2006, Disney reacquired the Oswald character from Universal, and Oswald the Lucky Rabbit at last came home.

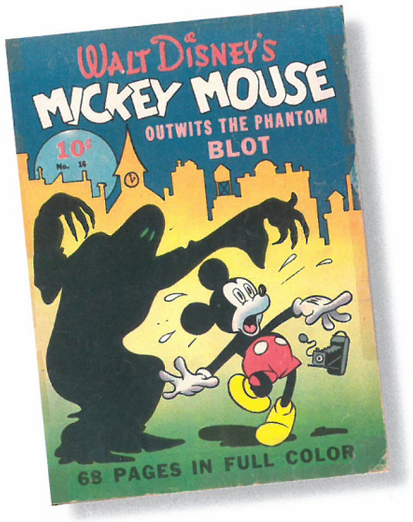
FAR RIGHT: Oswald, looking serious, in one of our 2D cinematic sequences. He's flying a rocketship. You just know that can't end well.

OPPOSITE: This sketch designed to capture Oswald's personality also establishes the importance of his remote control in the Mad Doctor's workshop atop Dark Beauty Castle.

—Warren Spector



The Blot



THIS PAGE: The Phantom Blot as he appeared in Floyd Gottfredson's comic book from 1940 and the revamped Blot from the *Disney Epic Mickey* game. They share a name, but not much more. As far as we know . . .

OPPOSITE: Every great hero needs a great villain. The Blot clearly qualifies. This inspirational concept piece from one of the game's boss battles shows just how threatening he can be.

—Warren Spector

The Phantom Blot may be the strangest and most mysterious character in the entire Disney pantheon. In 1939, he first appeared in comic strips, where he figured as a master criminal. He has returned in various guises, always villainous, a formless, malevolent black shape. *Disney Epic Mickey* takes this classic character and re-imagines the Phantom Blot as the Blot, a monstrous threat to Wasteland.

The logic of our mythology made the Phantom Blot the appropriate ultimate villain. He's a raw mix of the magic paint and thinner that make up the cartoon world. Unlike any other character, it was created by accident, a side effect of Mickey's mischief. If there's any character worse off than Oswald, it's the Blot, which was never given any shape at all, or the love of an audience. As a result it eternally craves these things.



It's not evil by itself, but the Blot pursues these goals ruthlessly. It can absorb the paint from any character or object, leaving it a thinned husk, which makes it the enemy of everything in Wasteland. It knows (but doesn't truly understand) that no matter how powerful it gets, only someone with the heart of a true cartoon character can leave Wasteland. The resulting plan is simple—pull Mickey into Wasteland, steal his heart, and escape.

As Mickey and Oswald fight the Blot, they start to realize that what







they're fighting is really an incarnation of the worst aspects of themselves: Oswald's gnawing hatred and obsessively longing for fame, combined with Mickey's carelessness about the needs of others and his irresponsibility. Mickey has never taken responsibility for creating the Blot, for spilling the thinner, and leaving the forgotten characters behind. The Blot is the perfect opponent for them—their own shadows, personified.

The Blot we first meet is only a tiny droplet of the semiliquid blot. (Warren keeps a jar of slime in his office, to refer to for the Blot's consistency.) It can also spawn Blotlings, blobs of animated paint and thinner that can roam the land and cause trouble.

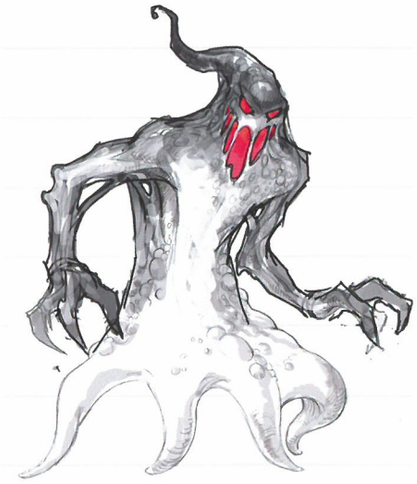
The Phantom Blot grows bigger and bigger throughout the game. As we first meet the Blot it is an evolved, semiliquid version of the Blot we know from the past, the dark hooded silhouette.

As it grows, it takes on a more and more villainous shape, and ultimately takes a form based on Chernabog, the towering winged demon from the "Night on Bald Mountain" sequence in the 1940 film *Fantasia*.

ABOVE: A screenshot from one of our 2D cinematic sequences that shows the true Blot, the force of nature, far more dangerous than the mere shadows our heroes have dealt with to this point.

FAR RIGHT: An early black and white image of the monstrous Blot.

—Warren Spector





TOP: The Blot, like all of our characters, went through many incarnations. This one captured some important elements—most notably the "tail" trailing from the top of his head, a suggestion for adding some humor to the character, from the amazing folks at Disney Feature Animation.

ABOVE: The image that finally captured the creepy, scary, essence of the Blot! We knew we had our villain when the artist showed us this concept!

RIGHT: Mickey meets Chernabog anyone? The little guy up against incredible odds. A classic story captured in a single image. The very essence of our story.

—WS







Pete



THIS PAGE: We wanted Mickey to feel like there was a version of Pete around every corner—a veritable "league of Petes"—and always garbed appropriately for the location, as in his Small World incarnation.

OPPOSITE: Pete in one of our 2D cinematic sequences looking appropriately full of himself.

—Warren Spector

Pete is one of the oldest characters in all of Disney animation, best described as a hulking, bearlike cat, usually with a wooden leg (which has been known to change legs at the hands of forgetful animators). He has played the villain to both Oswald and Mickey Mouse in their earliest cartoons—he first met Mickey in 1928's *Steamboat Willie* and has followed him from story to story ever since. His defining traits are his gruff demeanor, scheming determination, and ever-present cigar, but he seems to take on other traits from his surroundings and his role in the story. Over the years, he's been Mickey's most versatile foe by far, appearing as Peg-Leg Pete, Bootleg Pete, Sergeant Pete, Sneaky Pete, Baron Pete, Count Pete, Emperor Pete, a chef, an opera impresario, a mechanic, a sheriff, and a dozen others.



Many different versions of Pete have also turned up in different parts of the Wasteland. The Petes all manage to coexist more or less peacefully with







ABOVE, LEFT TO RIGHT: Who better to battle in Tomorrow City than a version of Pete? We worked long and hard to capture the essence of *Tron* costuming for this version of Pete.

OPPOSITE: Pete and Mickey square off in a *Tron*-inspired boss battle in Tomorrow City.

—Warren Spector

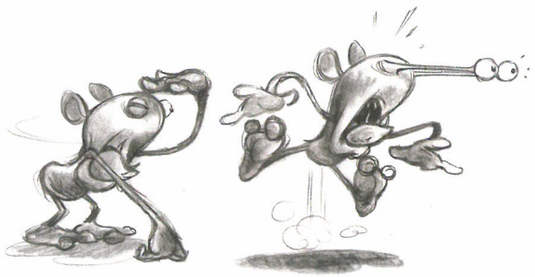
one another, without worrying too much about the philosophical implications of being in two places at once. Pete is too ornery to really team up with the Blot but doesn't seem to show a lot of scruples otherwise. Certainly he'll never stop making trouble for Mickey—he sticks to what he knows.

One of the fun parts of *Disney Epic Mickey* is tracking how Pete's multiple identities keep surfacing throughout the game. In the Gremlin Village, he's Small Pete, dressed in an old-fashioned Dutch girl's outfit. In Mean Street, he's the sheriff. In Ventureland, he's Pete Pan. Tomorrow City turns him into Petetronic, remade to resemble the character Sark from the movie *Tron*.



Pete is a classic Disney villain. The animation team could not help but poke fun at him when we animated Pan Pete. We thought, what if he got hit on the head by a frying pan and when he woke up he saw his clothing and felt like he was the real Peter Pan? —**Jorma Auburn,** *Lead Artist/Animation*









THIS PAGE: The Spatters were among the few characters we created specifically for the game. All Disney villains have silly Disney minions. The Blot deserved no less. We had a ton of fun dressing them up!

OPPOSITE: Though all of the Blot's minions, called *Blotlings*, as a group, had their silly qualities, some were more serious and frightening than others. As the game went on, the level of peril had to go up!

—Warren Spector

Blotlings

These malevolent drippings from the great Phantom Blot come in four varieties: Spatters, Seers, Sweepers (dark analogs of the brooms from "Sorcerer's Apprentice"), and the big, stationary Spladooshes.

Like the Petes, the Spatters keep changing costumes throughout the game. In the Gremlin Village alone, you can find European, Asian, and Egyptian Spatters (performing the inevitable faux-Egyptian dance). In the Haunted Mansion, they put on top hats and formal dress; in Dark Beauty Castle, they dress as jesters; in Tomorrow City, they dress as tiny *Tron* soldiers; and in Ventureland, they are, naturally, pirates. It's unclear whether the different regions of Wasteland have their own particular magic or if, despite being villains, the Spatters are just getting into the spirit of things.







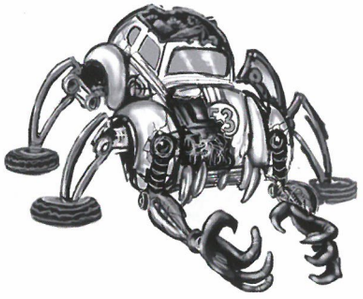


The Spatters were among the first characters we designed. They're so goofy and expressive that we were continually finding silly situations to put them in and fun new ways to use them. They've become the game's mascots.

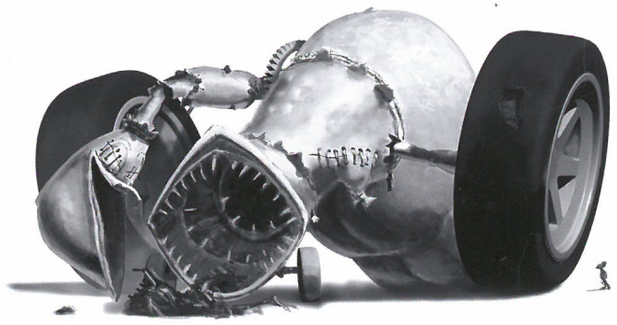
—John Ford,
Senior Animator

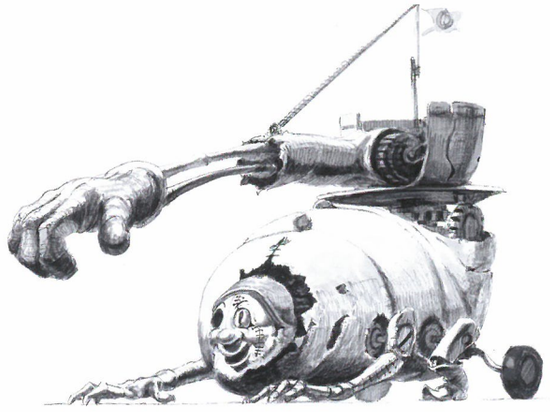



MARKET HOUSE
MARKET HOUSE









Beetleworx

Beetleworx may be the single maddest creation of the *Disney Epic Mickey* artists, robots built out of mixed-up and mangled elements of every kind of Disney creation. They were created by the Mad Doctor as helpers in the early days of Wasteland, built out of discarded pieces of animatronic exhibits. Now that the Mad Doctor works for the Blot, the Beetleworx are running amok throughout Wasteland. Unlike the Blotlings, underneath their skin they're built out of metal parts, immune to paint and thinner alike, so players have to come up with new tricks to cope with them.

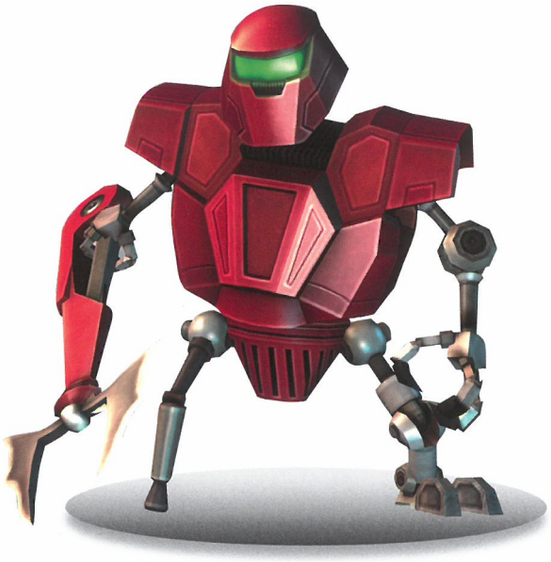
Graphically, their appearance emerges from a combination of steampunk and classic animatronic characters from every Disney era,

OPPOSITE: An early Beetleworx design on an early Mean Street concept with an early version of Mickey Mouse. (Extra credit to anyone who can identify the source of the background skybox painting. Hint: It's from a well-known Disney animated feature . . .)

—Warren Spector

The mandate for the Beetleworx was to amp up the "creep" factor. This was achieved with various bug-like movements and twitches. One animator really took it upon himself to master their movement and became the go-to Beetleworx animator. If you look closely at him you will see that his eye twitches. Coincidence, maybe . . . —**Jorma Auburn,** *Lead Artist/Animation*





collected up, scrambled, and reassembled through the Junction Point artists' imaginations.

The Beetleworx have their own themed appearance, depending on where you meet them, and some of them are composed with such inventiveness that they deserve special mention.

The Tomorrow City "Basher" Beetleworx (above right) is built to echo the robot Maximillian from Disney's cult classic 1979 sci-fi film, *The Black Hole* (watch for a cameo from V.I.N.CENT in the same area!).



In Ventureland, the "Hopper" Beetleworx (right) look like the vultures from *The Jungle Book*.



The Tomorrow City "Cannon" type (above left) is made of parts from a *Tron* Light Cycle.

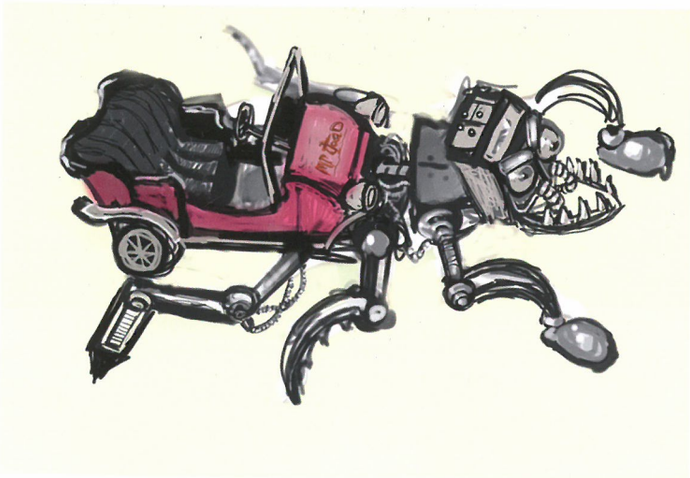
The "Spinner" Beetleworx (left) are built out of upside-down teacups from the Mad Tea Party ride.

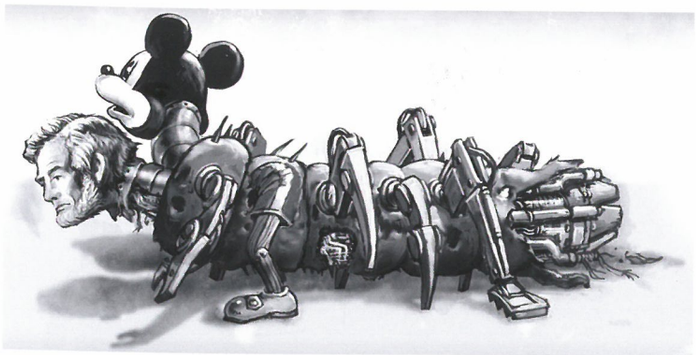
The "Cannon" type (opposite) appears in the Lonesome Manor as a terrifyingly reassembled witch, with a poison apple for a body and spidery metal legs.



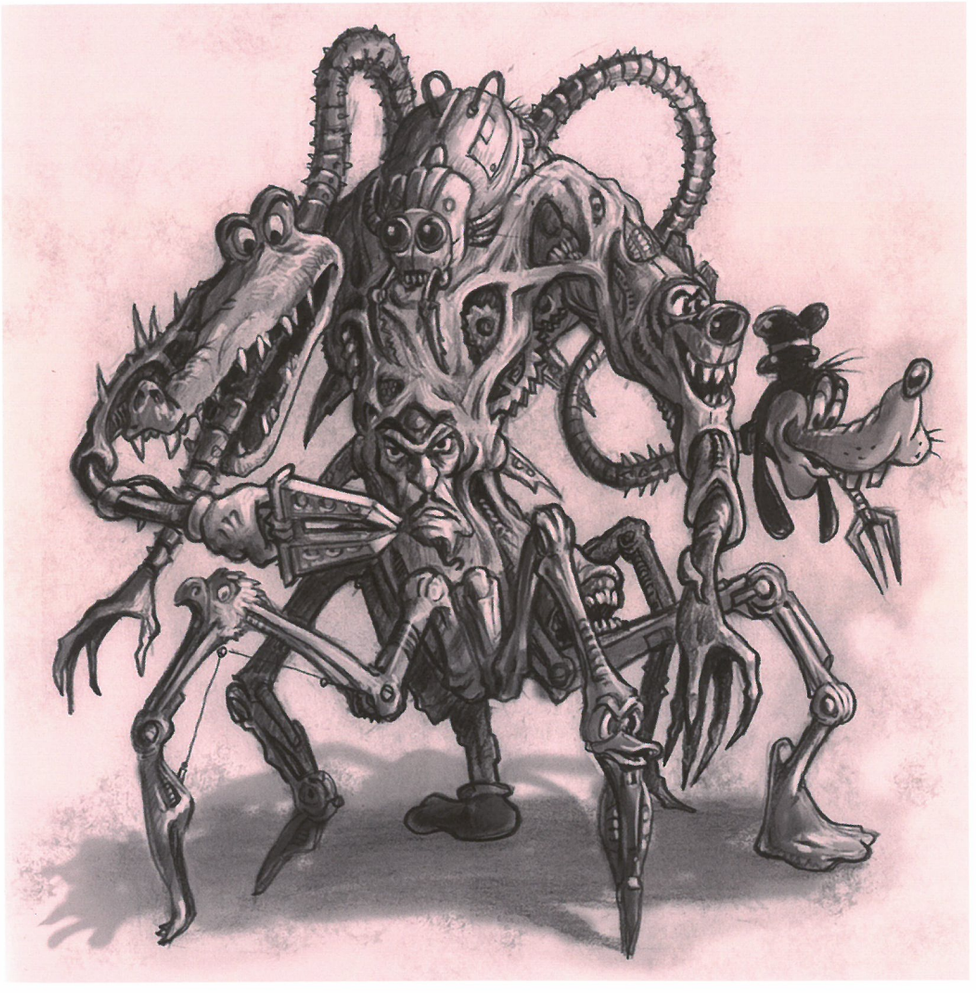


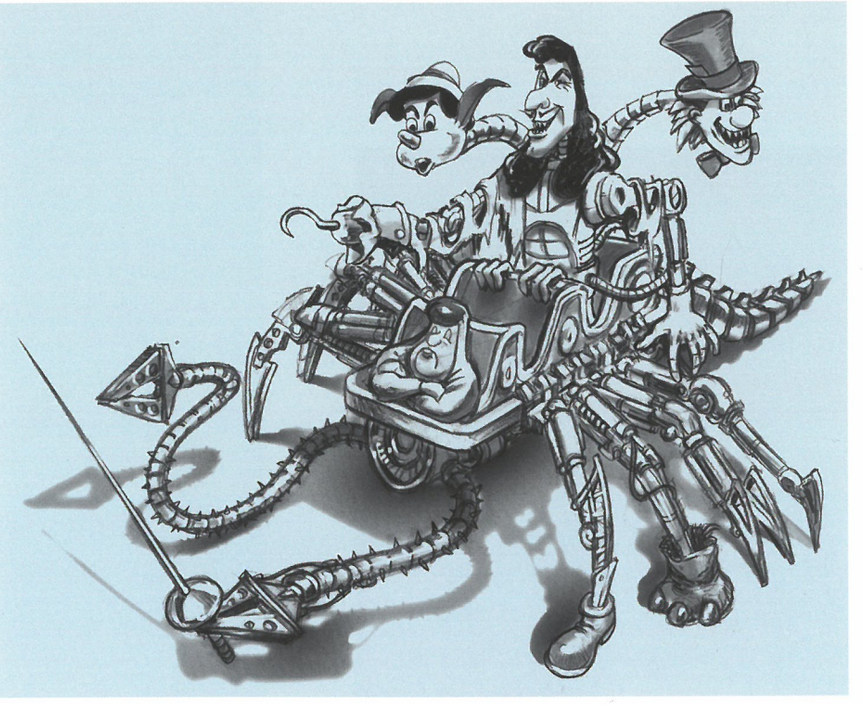






The Beetleworx were inspired by the Misfit toys in the movie, *Toy Story*. —**Rob Kovach,** *Lead Technical Artist*







THIS PAGE: We wanted the Beetleworx to be scary, but not *too* scary. And they had to be built from recognizable Disney parts from theme park rides and attractions.

OPPOSITE: Some of these were too organic, or too difficult to model and animate, but some, like the one on the far left, were just right.

—Warren Spector





THIS PAGE AND OPPOSITE: Much of our story is communicated through 2D cinematic sequences inspired by classic Disney storyboard and concept art.

—Warren Spector

Cinematics

Any story-driven game employs an arsenal of different storytelling techniques. *Disney Epic Mickey* uses classic two-dimensional cartoon sequences to connect sections of the story, explain game concepts, or just for fun. These were created by Powerhouse Animation Studios, located in Austin, TX, just down the road from Junction Point. Warren planned for these animations to have a different feel from the rest of the game—"I wanted something like storybook or concept art brought to life," he explains—but within those guidelines, Powerhouse was free to use their imaginations.

When he saw the results, Warren recalls, "I loved them from the start." He immediately recognized the influence of seminal Disney artist Mary Blair. Blair (as any Disney fanatic knows) was an artist and designer who helped create the look of Disney films such as *Cinderella*, *Alice in Wonderland*, *Peter Pan*, and *Song of the South*, as well as the classic theme-park attraction "It's a Small World." Her work has an intentionally-flat-storybook quality, but also shows a playful and innovative sense of shape and color that has been justly compared to Paul Klee and Henri Matisse. Warren pointed out the link: "I was expecting to see blank 'who's Mary Blair?' looks on the faces of the guys at Powerhouse. I should have known better—they're all animation fans from way back and said 'That's exactly what we were going for!'"







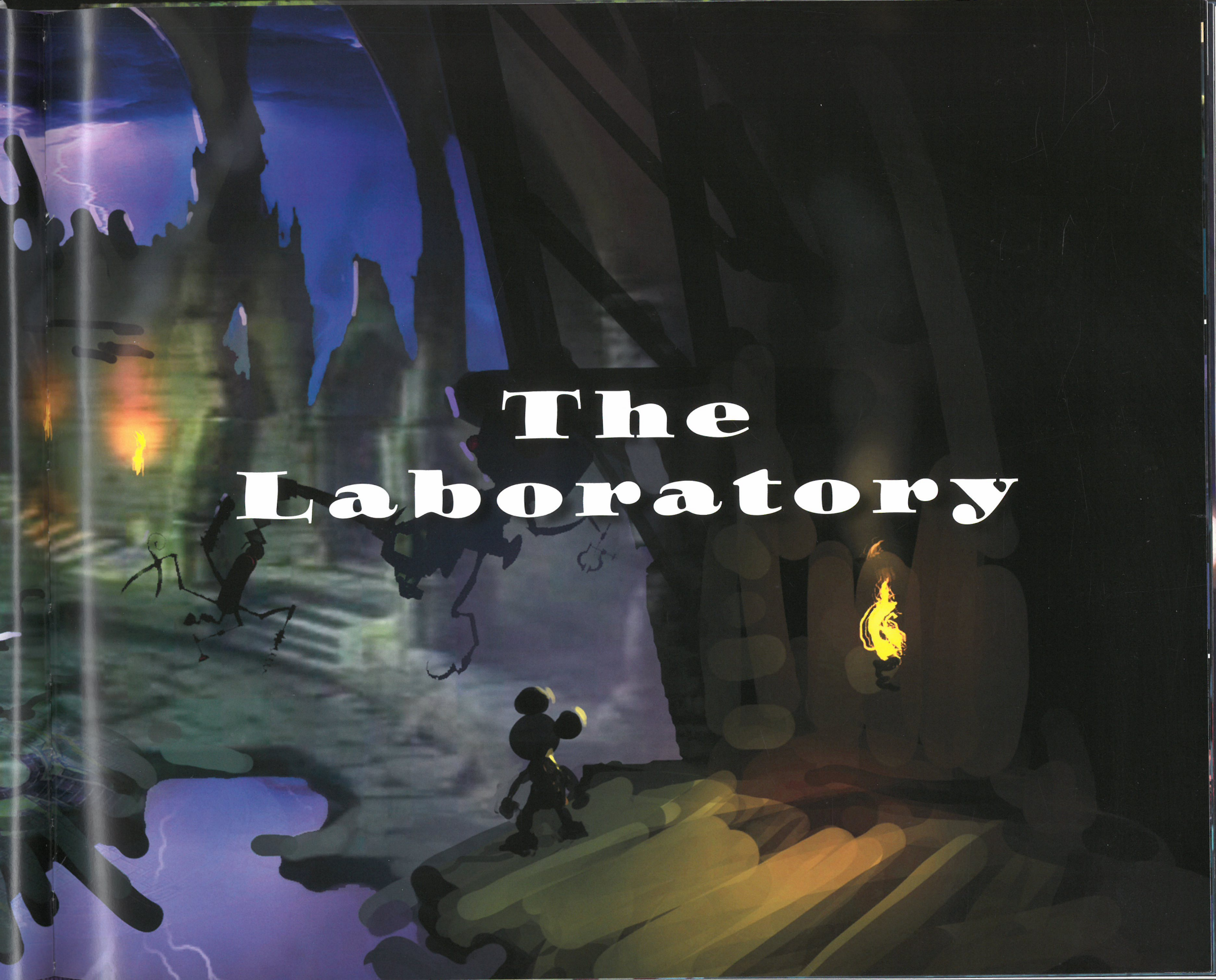


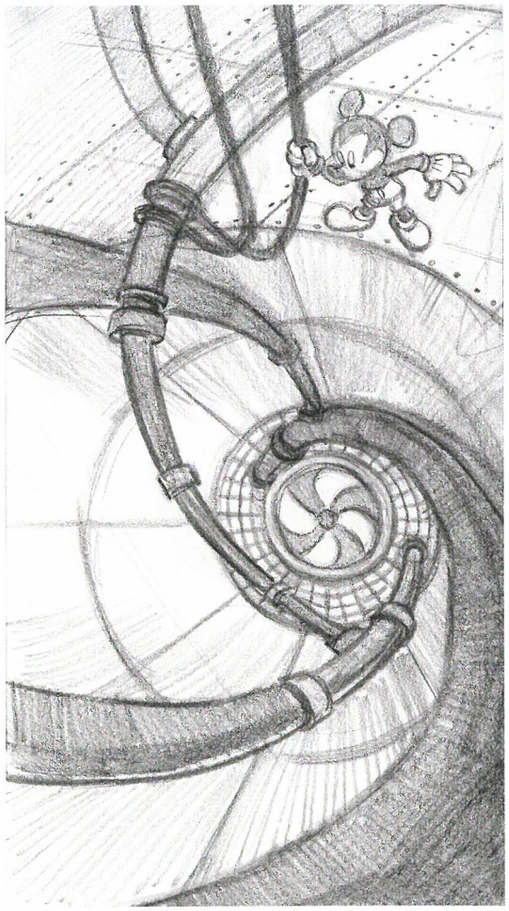


The strengths of Blair's work are everywhere in the work Powerhouse produced. The broad, clean shapes of the characters have a stylized but incredibly expressive quality. The chunky backgrounds are just as evocative—all the geometry is playfully off-kilter, so that even the grid of bars in Oswald's window is subtly askew. All the scenes have a twilight quality, pastel instead of bright, and a kind of blue wash that never lets us forget we're in the melancholy world of Wasteland.

Warren admits that initially there was resistance to his plan—"Everyone thought I was nuts to want yet *another* art style!" he says—but the non-interactive cartoon sequences give the game a new richness. Paradoxically, the change from rendered 3D to 2D cartoon images adds new depth and emotion to the characters and story, wonderfully contemplating what we find in the real-time, interactive game world.




The
Laboratory



The Mad Doctor's laboratory is Mickey's first view

of Wasteland. Oswald's image is everywhere—in stained glass and statuary—even though Mickey doesn't know who he is yet. The player sees painted, thinned, and inert matter for the first time, and learns how they work.

The laboratory and its owner originate in the classic Mickey short *The Mad Doctor* (1933), in which a mad scientist kidnaps Pluto and steals him away to his laboratory in a strange castle. The laboratory we first see is closely based on the feel of the cartoon short—the apparatus Mickey escapes from is a dangerously evolved version of one seen in the original animation.

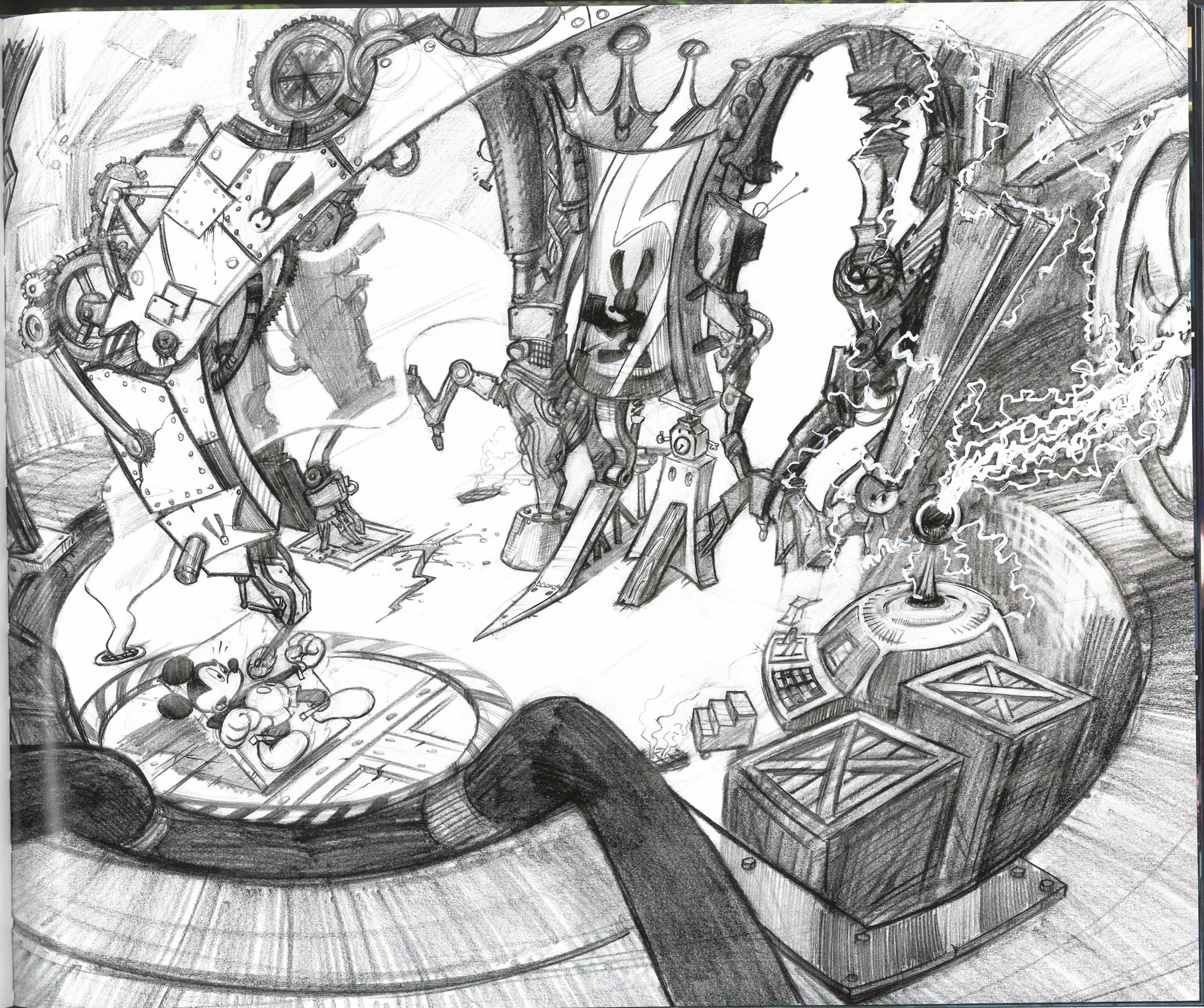
The laboratory is set inside Dark Beauty Castle, Wasteland's version of Sleeping Beauty Castle. The resulting decor is a hybrid of *The Mad Doctor* and *Sleeping Beauty*, combining elements of both into a Frankensteinian combination of medieval and high-tech.

When *Disney Epic Mickey* concept art first began emerging on the Internet, headlines announced that a "steampunk Mickey" was on the way. Steampunk being, of course, a movement in graphic design, fashion, and literature, a kind of Jules Verne spin on science fiction, where a Victorian-era science of steam power, brass fittings, and whimsical invention run amok. There was definitely a steampunk influence at work, in the restyled animatronics of the Beetleworx, or the early environments showing pipes and ductwork snaking through the landscape. In his days designing games at Origin Systems, Warren himself produced one of the earliest truly steampunk games, *Martian Dreams*, in which famous Victorian and Edwardian thinkers were transported to Mars.

ABOVE LEFT: The sense of scale we were after—the sense of a world big enough to make Mickey seem like a hero—is expertly conveyed in this sketch.

OPPOSITE: The Mad Doctor's heart extraction machine had to be threatening but not *too* threatening. Note that, in this early sketch, Oswald is at the controls trying to take Mickey's heart—his role changed dramatically during the course of development!

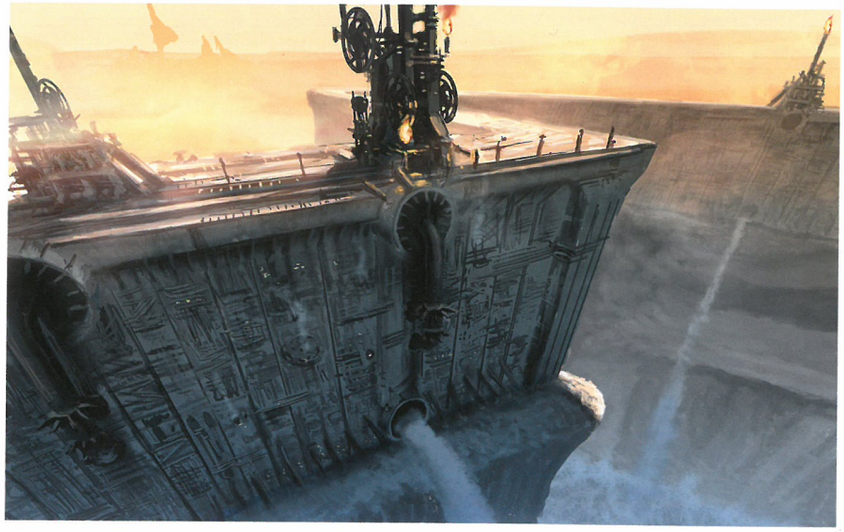
—Warren Spector





ABOVE: A little cartoon mouse trapped in a big, mechanical world!

—Warren Spector



As the project evolved, however, the steampunk influence receded as the game focused more clearly on a deeper exploration of the Disney style and Disney history. The steampunk influence is still there, especially in Mickeyjunk Mountain's industrial feel and the passages running through the Gremlin Village area.

The world is full of dark purples and greens, and levels of *Disney Epic Mickey* each have their own palette. As players advance through the game, they move through a carefully planned series of color schemes that ease transition between the different parts of Wasteland, so that the changes aren't too jarring. The shifts in color also create a kind of visual story line for the game. Mickey starts off immersed in dark blues and purples of the Mad Doctor's lab, which keep returning throughout the game, even as Mickey travels through wildly diverse lands of greens, blues, and yellows—the only missing shade seems to be a bright red. In the end, Mickey returns to the colors he started with, grown even darker and more intense in the Phantom Blot's interior, where he finds his heart again—the deep full-throated red he's been missing. The endgame is an explosion of hues, a flood of paint that restores every color to Wasteland.

TOP: Some of the early concepts were beautiful, but too realistic, too serious for a Disney cartoon and theme park inspired world.

OPPOSITE: A trick we picked up from Pixar was the creation of "color scripts"—the entire game broken down by location/scene and the dominant colors in each location/scene. This really helped us ensure there was an arc to the art direction as well as the narrative and that we weren't going to fatigue players with monochromatic color choices.

—WS
















Gus the Gremlin



ABOVE AND TOP: Gremlins come in a variety of colors but there's only one Gus.

OPPOSITE: The mustachioed Gus, leader of the Gremlins and Mickey's "spirit guide" in Wasteland, in one of his more thoughtful moments.

—Warren Spector

This level introduces Gus the Gremlin, who will be

Mickey's guide throughout the game. The Gremlins are exactly the kind of characters who show up in Wasteland through no fault of their own. They originated as a folk myth among British World War II pilots, mischievous beings behind otherwise inexplicable mechanical errors. In 1942, Roald Dahl (famous author of *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, *James and the Giant Peach*, and many others) wrote a short story about them , *The Gremlins: A Royal Air Force Story*, illustrated by Bill Justice and Al Dempster. The book was meant to come in advance of a feature film about the Gremlins, which never came together, and after that they sank into obscurity (*The Gremlins* was finally republished in 2006, so there is hope for the Gremlins yet). *Disney Epic Mickey* is the first place they have ever appeared as fully animated characters.

We tried various personalities for the Gremlins, as there was a lot of wiggle room for them. We went from uber cute to totally zany, and found a happy, charming middle of the road for them.

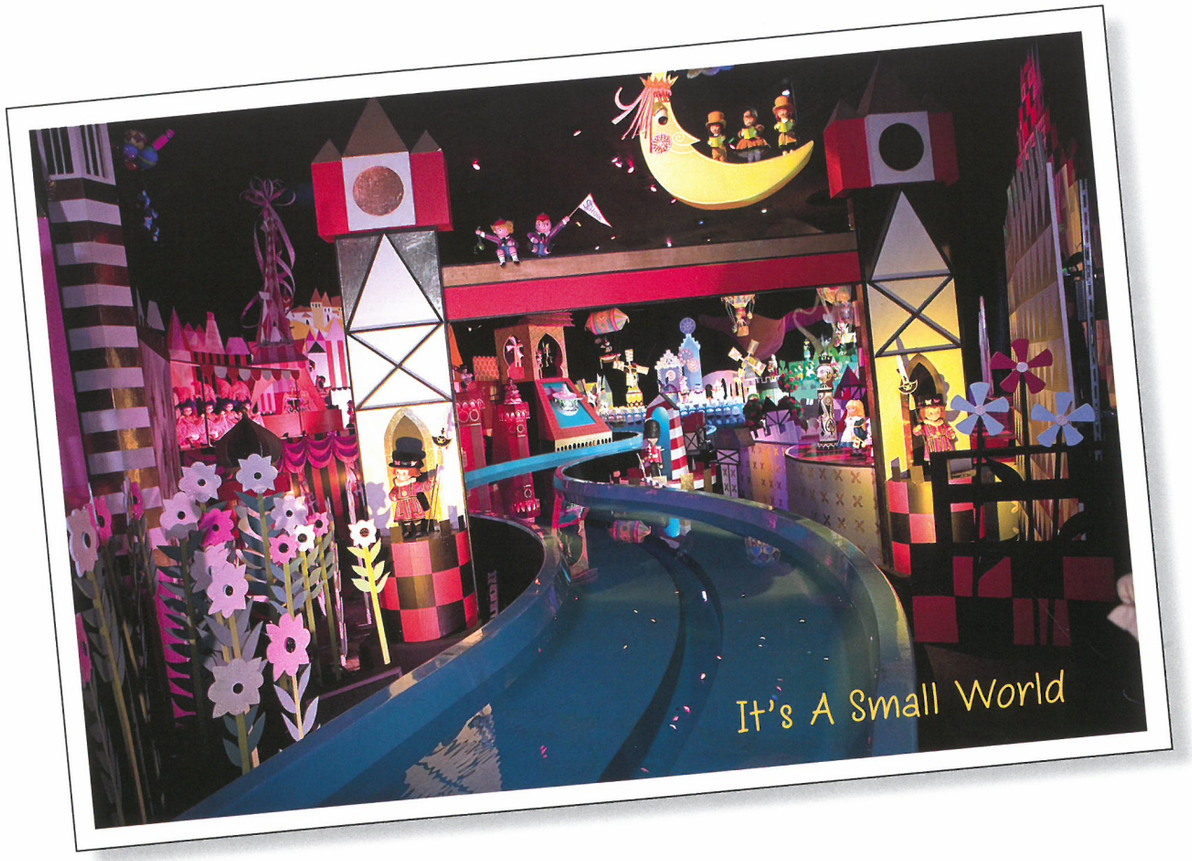
—Jorma Auburn,
Lead Artist/Animation

The Gremlins of Wasteland are just like their source material—scrappy, resourceful, and mechanically savvy. Led by Gus the Gremlin, they try to keep the rides and buildings of Wasteland in good repair, although it's a constant battle against the thinner and Beetleworx. It's this ongoing struggle that gives so much of Wasteland it's half-finished look, which we begin to see around the Gremlin Village area.





Gremlin Village





ABOVE: We tried some pretty far-out stuff before realizing we had to remain true to the original ride!

OPPOSITE: This image was the first that nailed the combination of fidelity to the real ride and the whimsy of a world created from discarded stuff by a cartoon rabbit. And the thinner was starting to look pretty threatening, too!

—WS

The first minute the Junction Point team thought of producing a strange, distorted reflection of the Magic Kingdom, they knew there had to be a version of It's a Small World. The ride was built for the 1964 World's Fair, designed by seminal Disney artist Mary Blair. Since then, both the ride and its eponymous song have become one of the Magic Kingdom's best-known attractions.

Over time, abandoned sketches and used-up parts of the Small World ride fell into Wasteland, and Oswald used them to make a ride of his own. It's also where the Gremlins made their home, and both elements combine to form a kind of mutated ride crossed with a Gremlin dwelling.

As Mickey enters the village, he starts to realize that everything in

ABOVE: Everything in *Disney Epic Mickey* was inspired by something real from Disney's past or present. We had to get things right or fans would have been (justifiably) annoyed. This is just one of hundreds of images we used to make sure we got the Small World ride details right!

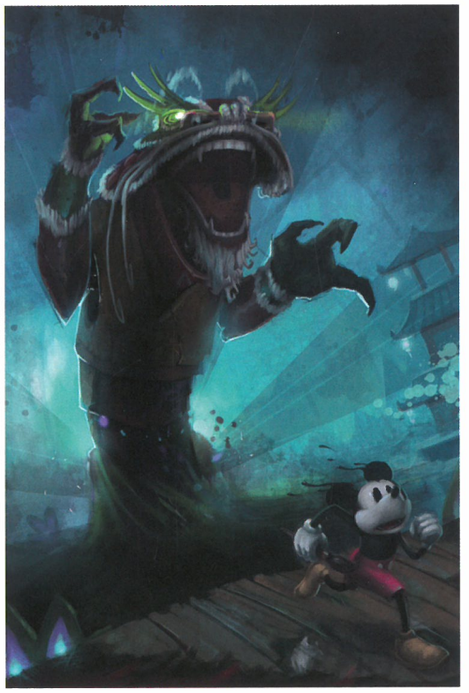
—Warren Spector





We were thrilled that Disney was letting us take their theme park and transform it into a whole new world and sometimes even into a living and breathing character such as the Clock Tower Boss.

—**Jordan Lamarre-Wan,**
Associate Concept Artist



Wasteland is both a dark parody and a loving tribute to its Magic Kingdom equivalent. For players to see this familiar ride in its Wasteland form makes that clear instantly. To that end, the level starts with a ticket booth and a line, then leads players through the Europe, Asia, and Africa zones. Junction Point artists worked closely from photo reference to build exact copies of features from the original ride—the dolls and national landmarks correspond incredibly well. The pièce de résistance is a giant, demented version of the Clock Tower built into the real ride's facade.

This area delivers on two of the game's core satisfactions: first, to be able to run around in a Disney ride, climb on all the amazing exhibits, and peer behind the scenes at the gears and sets that make it run; and second—to be able to interact with a core element of a Disney ride in a way that would be impossible in the real world.

ABOVE: Another early sketch that clearly captures some of the details that ground players in the reality of our version of Small World, which we called Gremlin Village.

RIGHT: An ornamental dragon from the Asia section of Small World comes to life in the game.

—Warren Spector









THIS SPREAD: A variety of locations in Gremlin Village, the Wasteland version of the It's a Small World ride.





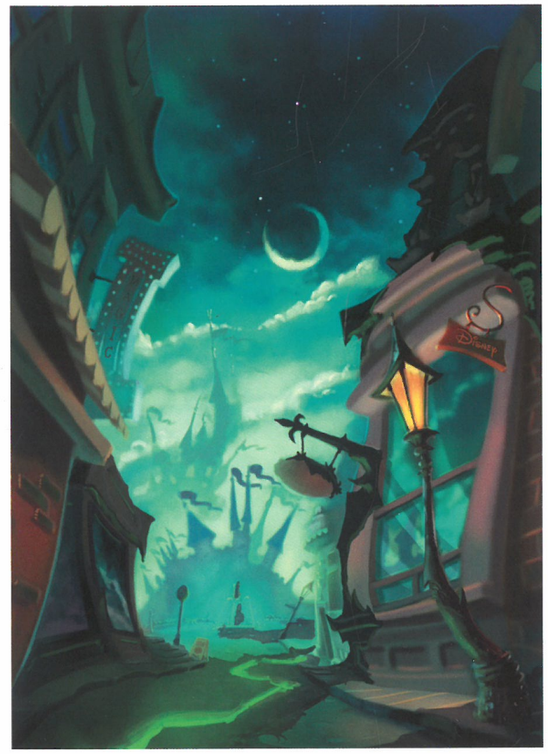


Mean Street




PRIVATE EYE
PRIVATE EYE
HARDWARE
BAKERY
HARDWARE
10/6
©CLOTH





LEFT: Mean Street, the Wasteland equivalent of Main Street, U.S.A., had to be familiar to players—we wanted them to feel as if they'd already visited Mean Street. Real world reference was critical.

ABOVE: A darker, more twisted take on Mean Street.

—WS

Mean Street is Wasteland's analogue of Main Street, U.S.A., the hub and heart of the Magic Kingdom. It's a vista that has to forcefully introduce the idea of an alternate-universe Disneyland, reshaped in Oswald's image. Mean Street is seeded with features from the real park, like the town square, movie theater, emporium, penny arcade, and ice cream parlor. But this isn't the Happiest Place on Earth, it's something strange and sad, expressing in one memorable vista the idea of a cartoon mourning, longing for, and hating its former happiness.

OPPOSITE: Early designs for Wasteland saw it as a more urban, less park-inspired place than it eventually became. Notice the art supplies—paint tubes, pencils, etc.—used as structural elements of the world. This idea didn't make the final cut, but it was certainly an intriguing idea!

—Warren Spector

Key elements of *Disney Epic Mickey*'s visual style were worked out in the design of Mean Street. Early versions tried out a more urban feel, built on a much larger scale. In some artwork, cracks in the infrastructure revealed



ABOVE: Perhaps the most important thing we had to do to convince players they were in a Disney park was to capture the vista visitors experience when they enter the park and stand at the base of Main Street, U.S.A. looking at the iconic castle in the distance. This image captures the Wasteland version of that scene as it appears in the game.

—Warren Spector

industrial ducts and pipes, opening the way to underground passages (which, some say, exist beneath the real-world Disney parks).

Mean Street was also a test bed for what inert and painted matter looked like. Early versions showed a much sharper distinction between the two, which was easier for players to read but less appealing visually.

Over time, the look went closer to what a real Disney park looks like,



LEFT: Another view of Mean Street at night.

BELOW: Combining inert and painted surfaces in a pleasing, coherent whole was a challenge.

BOTTOM: Finding the right balance of realism, fantasy, whimsy and darkness was another challenge the team tackled. This image was a little too dark.

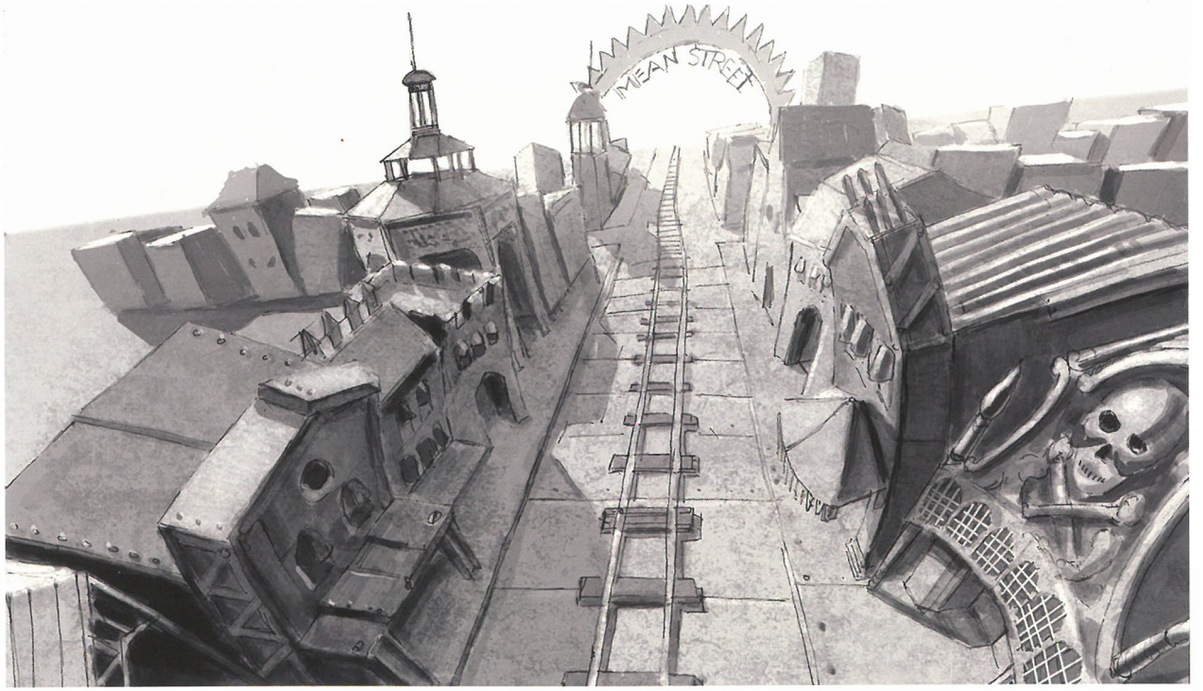
—WS



the rows of colorful two-story buildings. The distance views were deliberately filled in by flat panels like stage sets, initially still backgrounds from the animated film *Lady and the Tramp*. Just as in the real park, Mean Street is the hub from which players can visit several different areas of the world—Tomorrow City, OsTown, and Ventureland.



The original Disneyland's Main Street, U.S.A., is a beautifully designed interactive space. Immediately upon entry, visitors are completely immersed in a richly imagined world that draws them forward to explore. The area is seeded with attractions like the ice cream parlor and the movie theater, but guests can stop or explore at their own pace, and are always rewarded with a new discovery.





ABOVE: The iconic statue of Walt holding Mickey's hand that stands at the hub space that links Main Street USA to all the lands at the Disney parks had to be a part of our world as well – with one notable change, of course! —WS

The spacious but linear flow of Main Street takes them to the heart of Disneyland, a town square that opens out toward all the park's areas—Tomorrowland, Fantasyland, Adventureland, Frontierland—visitors face inviting vistas in all directions. The scene is dominated by a fairy-tale castle that embodies the spirit of imagination that animates the park. At the very center stands Walt himself, hand in hand with Mickey. Walt's arm is outstretched, presenting the wonders of the park for Mickey's enjoyment, and the pose dramatizes the space's intended effect on the visitor.

Mean Street is designed on the same principle, a broad avenue to explore, with smaller quests and shops everywhere you turn. Of course, there are small differences. It's not yet a free space, it's a land that Mickey must work to repair and liberate. And, of course, the statue is different too—instead of Walt and Mickey, it's Walt and Oswald. Mean Street is, fundamentally, an expression of Oswald's longing for the life that should have been his.

ABOVE: An early concept for Mean Street that looked a bit too much like a Western town and too little like the real thing.

OPPOSITE: A dark and evocative version of Mean Street that was just too desolate and not whimsical enough.

—Warren Spector







TOP: Horace in a film noir-inspired shot from one of the game's 2D cinematics.

ABOVE: Horace is an eternally optimistic fellow!

OPPOSITE: Horace, happy to see his old pal, Mickey Mouse!

—Warren Spector

Horace Horsecollar

Horace is an ancient denizen of the Disney universe.

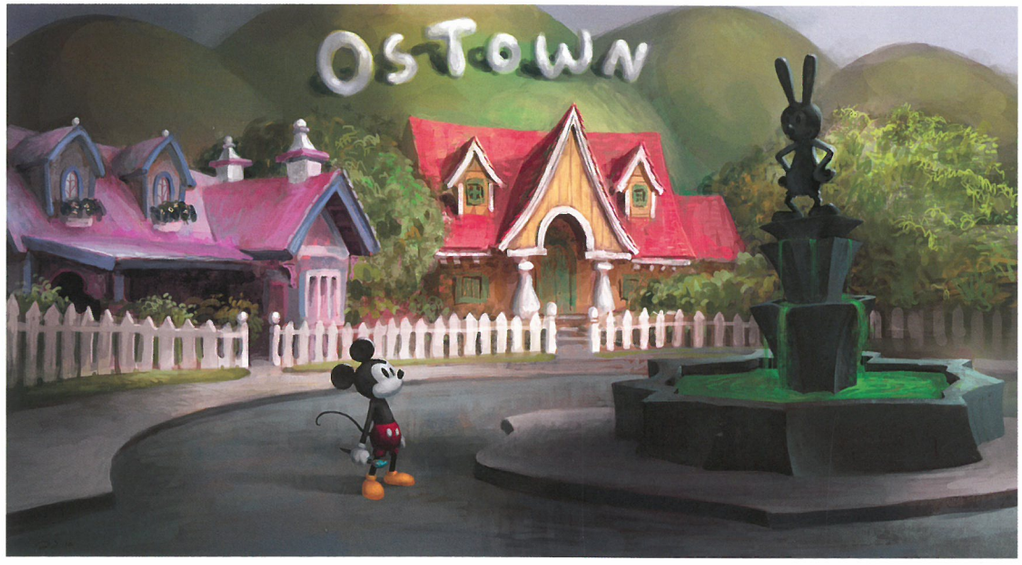
He first appeared in *The Plowboy*, a Mickey cartoon, in 1929. He was relatively equine in his early cartoons, but over time he evolved more and more human traits. His personality stayed the same—jovial, playful, and not incredibly bright—but he was never a breakout star the way some of Mickey's other friends were, so meeting him in Wasteland is no surprise. In Mean Street, he's taken a job as a private detective, and his office has a black-and-white, film noir decor.

He and Clarabelle Cow are in love (a flirtation begun all the way back in *The Plowboy*, in fact), but as the game begins they're on the outs—their romance is one of the game's many subplots.









TOP: OsTown, with Mickeyjunk Mountain looming ominously in the background.

ABOVE AND RIGHT: A house in OsTown, looking very much like Mickey's real house.

—Warren Spector





OsTown

OsTown is, of course, Oswald's attempt to build a version of Disneyland's Toontown in Wasteland—features like Mickey's house are very close duplicates of what you can find in the park. Part of OsTown's function is to show most clearly what the intact Wasteland once looked like, and how damaged it became in the violence of the thinner spill. The scene is split down the middle: bright intact houses stand to the left, and a fountain streaming thinner to slice it down the middle.

ABOVE: Mickey Mouse's house in the real world Toontown. —WS







Clarabelle Cow

Clarabelle Cow first appeared in *The Plowboy* (1929).

Like Horace, she evolved a more human appearance—at first she was drawn as a farm animal, but over time she learned to wear clothes and talk, and even take on a job as a gossip columnist. Like Horace, she appeared in dozens of cartoon shorts but never became a star, which explains her presence in Wasteland. She's here only in black-and-white—her color version has left her behind.



TOP: Clarabelle hears a voice she hasn't heard in many years—could it really be Mickey Mouse?

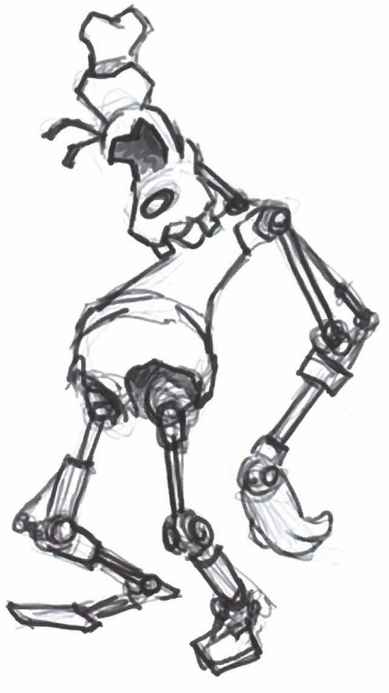
ABOVE: Clarabelle, here seen in black-and-white, loves nothing more than tending her garden.

OPPOSITE: How could the world forget a cow as cute as Clarabelle?

—Warren Spector



Animatronic Goofy



A Mickey Mouse game wouldn't be complete without

Mickey's closest friends. But, like Mickey, characters like Goofy and Donald Duck are much too famous to fall into Wasteland under normal circumstances. Instead, we have the animatronic pals.

Goofy is the first of the animatronic pals, animatronic versions of Mickey's friends and costars. Very early on, concept artists conceived of these strange, cyborg analogues of the central Disney cast. Once the concept art had been conceived, it was clear they were very strong incarnations of the *Disney Epic Mickey* aesthetic—the familiar Disney characters made gruesomely strange, and there was simply no excuse not to build them for the game.

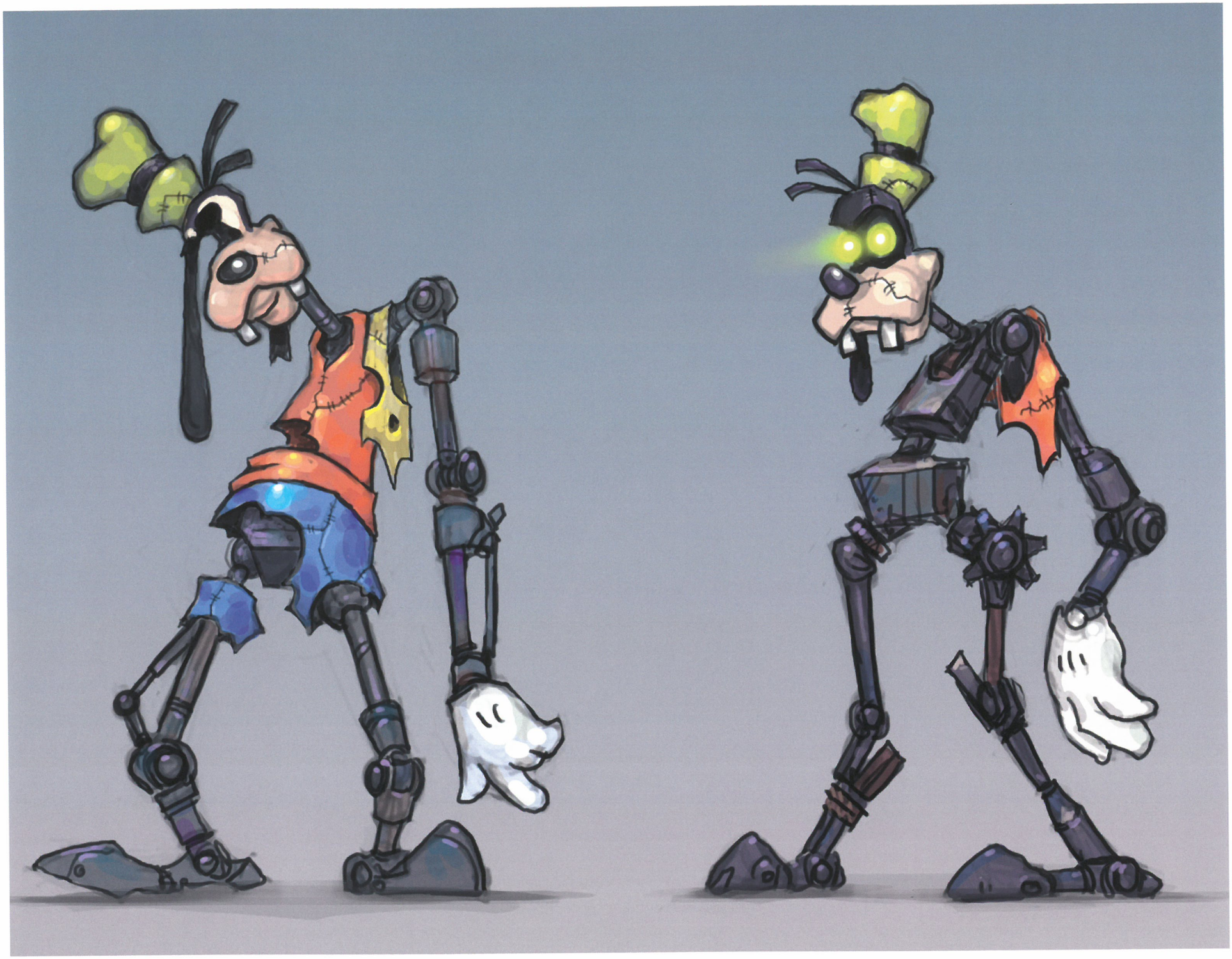
The story behind the animatronic pals is that Oswald wanted everything in Wasteland that Mickey had in the cartoon world. Almost more than anything else, he wanted friends like Mickey's. The Mad Doctor built these strange beings, patched together out of cast-off animatronic parts.

TOP: An early model of animatronic Goofy, before he acquired a vacuum cleaner for a foot!

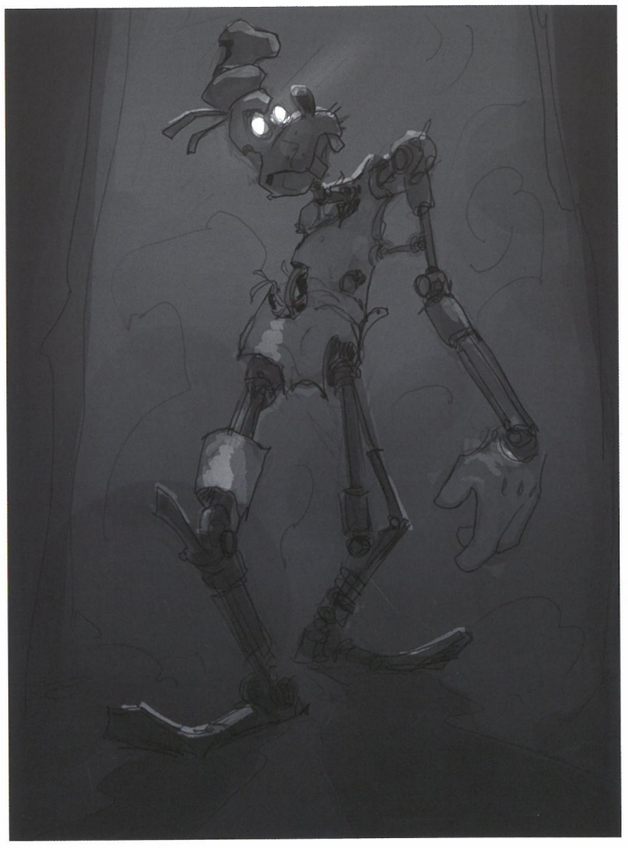
OPPOSITE: Even in dinged-up, incomplete animatronic form, Goofy's a fun-loving, happy-go-lucky guy.

—Warren Spector



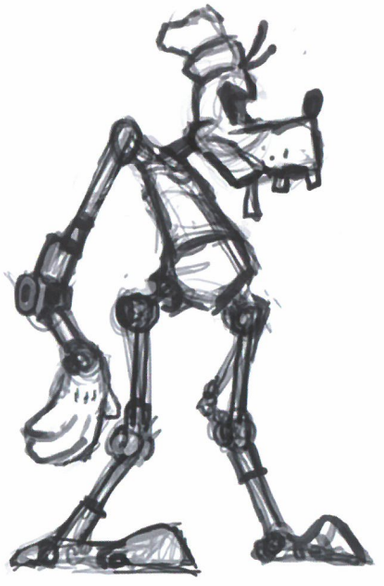






To me, this is what really made Wasteland—the animatronics. They lived here. This was their day-to-day world.

—Joe Bird,
Associate Artist/Environment

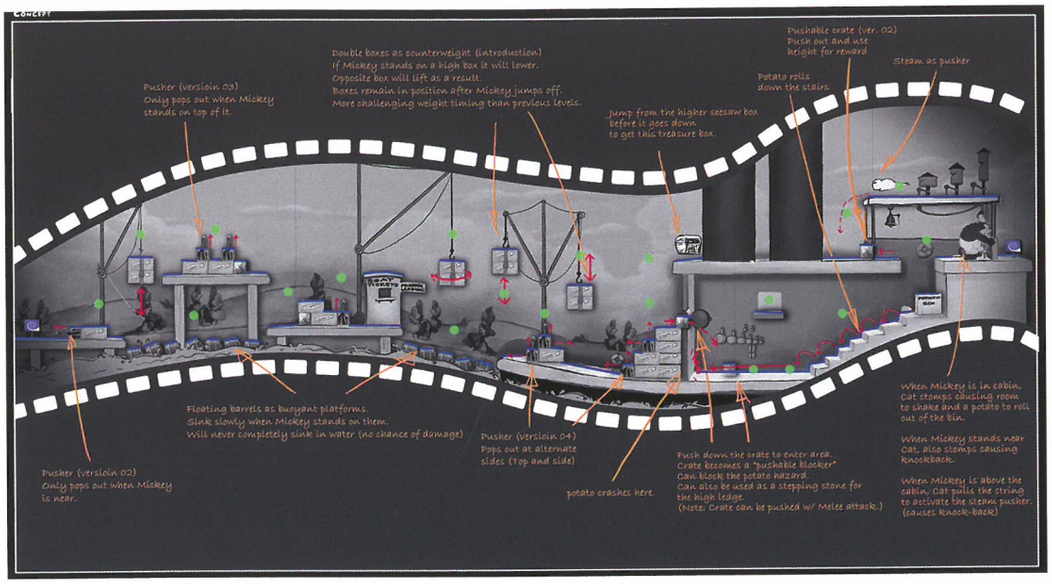


THIS PAGE AND OPPOSITE: Finding the right level of creepiness and familiarity was the big trick with the animatronic pals. These images were among the first where the team felt we were getting close.

—Warren Spector

Animatronic Goofy was one of the first images the public saw from *Disney Epic Mickey*. Goofy was conceived as a jaunty, country hick, likable and simple; here, he has become a zombie-like, grinning, one-armed cyborg. The final in-game Goofy turned out very true to its original conception. The detail was reduced so as to be more readable at its smaller size and necessarily lower resolution, but the gruesome essentials are all there.

When Mickey meets them, each of the pals has been taken to pieces by one of the Disney villains. Mickey isn't required to help put them back together. Deciding whether or not to do so is one of the choices that lets players decide what kind of hero they want Mickey Mouse to be.



The 2D levels gave our team the opportunity to relive several classic Disney cartoon moments.

—Scott Rays,
Senior Artist

Transitional Levels

Players travel between different areas of Wasteland

by jumping into movie screens and scrambling through a kind of cartoon subway system of obstacle courses. Each of these transitional areas takes a different classic Disney cartoon short and turns it into a fast-paced game level where Mickey runs through a two-dimensional world of moving platforms, enemies, and barriers.

OPPOSITE: Our goal was to make our 2D platforming levels as faithful to the cartoons that inspired them as we could. Anyone who's seen the classic cartoon, *Clock Cleaners*, would recognize this even without the title displayed on the movie screen at the left of the image. —WS

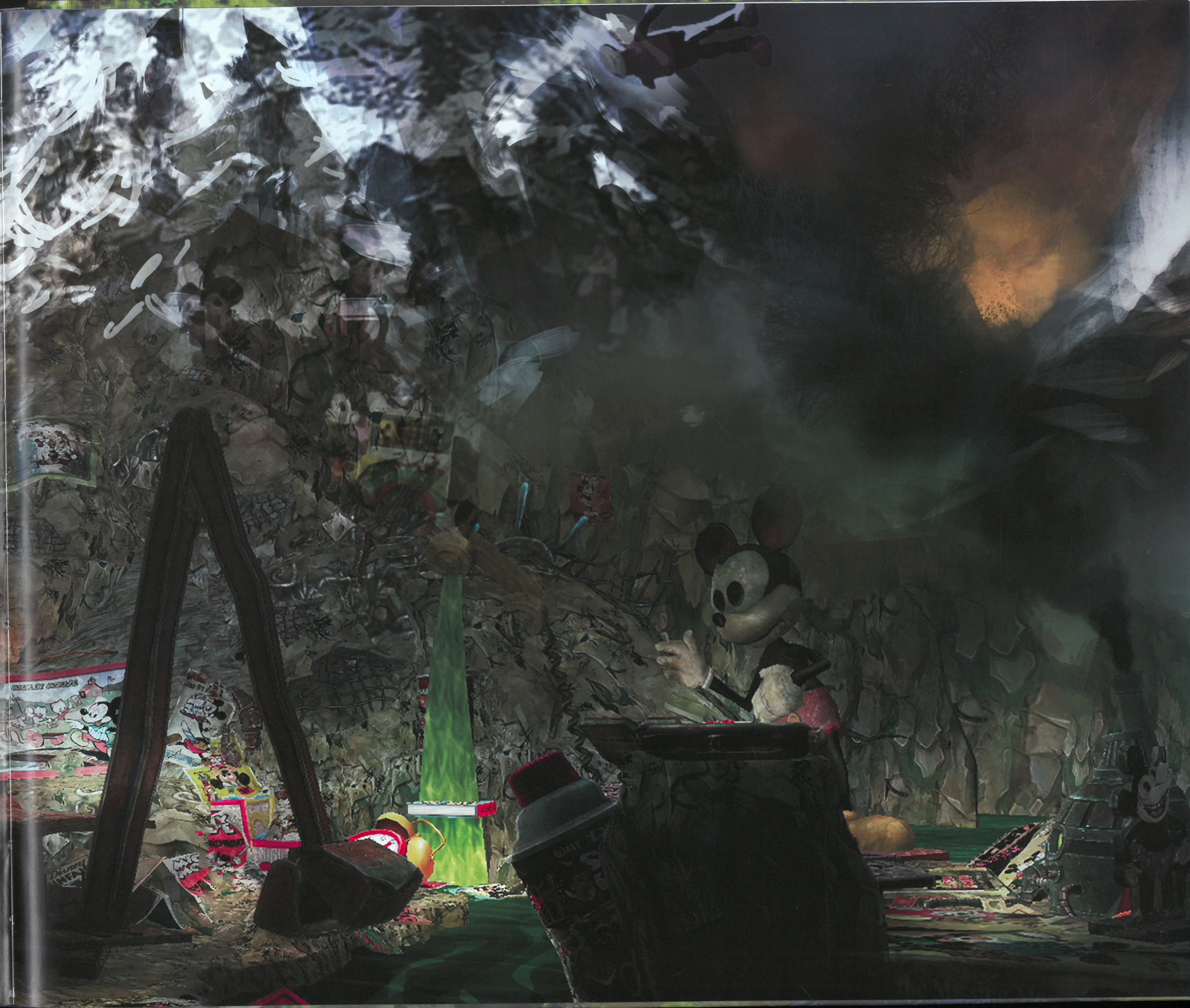
Disney Epic Mickey does a gorgeous job of translating the stylish, rhythmic feel of early Disney animation into atmospheric, kinetic gameplay areas. Each one has its own theme and atmosphere, from *Steamboat Willie* to *Plutopia* to *Sleeping Beauty*, and for an additional design challenge, most of these levels have to play equally well running in both directions. Mickeyjunk Mountain even features levels based on Oswald the Lucky Rabbit's adventures—before he can meet Oswald, Mickey can experience firsthand what Oswald's brief life as a cartoon star was like.

ABOVE: This image is interesting not only for its look at the entirety of a 2D level but because it reveals a bit about the process of critiquing levels as they were being constructed.

—Warren Spector


Clock
Cleaners


Mickeyjunk
Mountain


MICKEY MOUSE



Mickeyjunk Mountain is an enormous pile of

discarded Mickey Mouse merchandise that has tumbled into Wasteland, shaped into a rough image of the Matterhorn ride. Seeing Mickeyjunk Mountain is like seeing Mickey through Oswald's eyes. It's all the tawdry, vain aspects of fame, Mickey's image multiplied endlessly and stamped on goods, then dumped into Wasteland.

Clocks, purses, lunch boxes, guitars, novelty phones—anything with Mickey's picture that's ever been thrown away ends up as part of Mickeyjunk Mountain. The goods are huge, far out of scale with anything in Wasteland, which, remember, is small enough to fit on a real-world table. They're also made of real matter, not paint, which means they're immune to thinner. They'll last forever, sticking up out of the thinner ocean, a nonbiodegradable monument.



ABOVE: Mickeyjunk Mountain required even more research than most locations in the game—all that Mickeyjunk was based on licensed merchandise from the real world.

—Warren Spector

When Oswald started losing the war against the Phantom Blot, he retreated here, to sulk and simmer in his hatred for Mickey. It's only Mickey's arrival that pulls him out of this and puts him on the path to becoming a hero again.

Concept artists experimented with industrial looks for Mickeyjunk, as against a more natural mountain closer to the Matterhorn ride—in the end, they arrived at a hybrid look, part factory, part junk pile, part Alpine ride.

Inside Mickeyjunk Mountain, Mickey is forced to experience Oswald's past by running through versions of his early animated shorts *Trolley Troubles*, *Great Guns*, and *Oh, What a Knight*.

Early drafts of Mickeyjunk Mountain included an enormous yeti, just like in the Matterhorn, which would prove to be a robot piloted by Oswald himself. Alas, for reasons of scope it had to be cut from the game.



OPPOSITE TOP: Originally, the entrance to Mickeyjunk Mountain was going to be guarded by Chernabog, the demonic figure from the "Night on Bald Mountain" segment of *Fantasia*.

ABOVE: In early drafts, Mickeyjunk Mountain would be topped by the thinner jug, the same jug Mickey tipped into Wasteland. Inside the jug would be a dripping, underwater world holding all of Disney's underwater ideas, from Captain Nemo's submarine to the mermen of *The Little Mermaid*. It would be ruled by a rejected version of Ursula the sea witch, a wise woman who would reveal strange secrets about the Phantom Blot, Wasteland, and the nature of ink.

—WS


MICKEY MOUSE
75 YEARS OF





ABOVE: How strange it would be for Mickey to see his face and form everywhere he turns—and how sad for Oswald, who didn't get much merchandising support in his short career as a Disney star.

ABOVE RIGHT: Mickeyjunk was one of the darkest and creepiest locations in the game, as this image reveals.

RIGHT: The team did an amazing job creating an obstacle course made of Mickey Mouse merchandise!

OPPOSITE: If any single image captures the essence of Mickeyjunk and, maybe, the entire game, this is probably it.

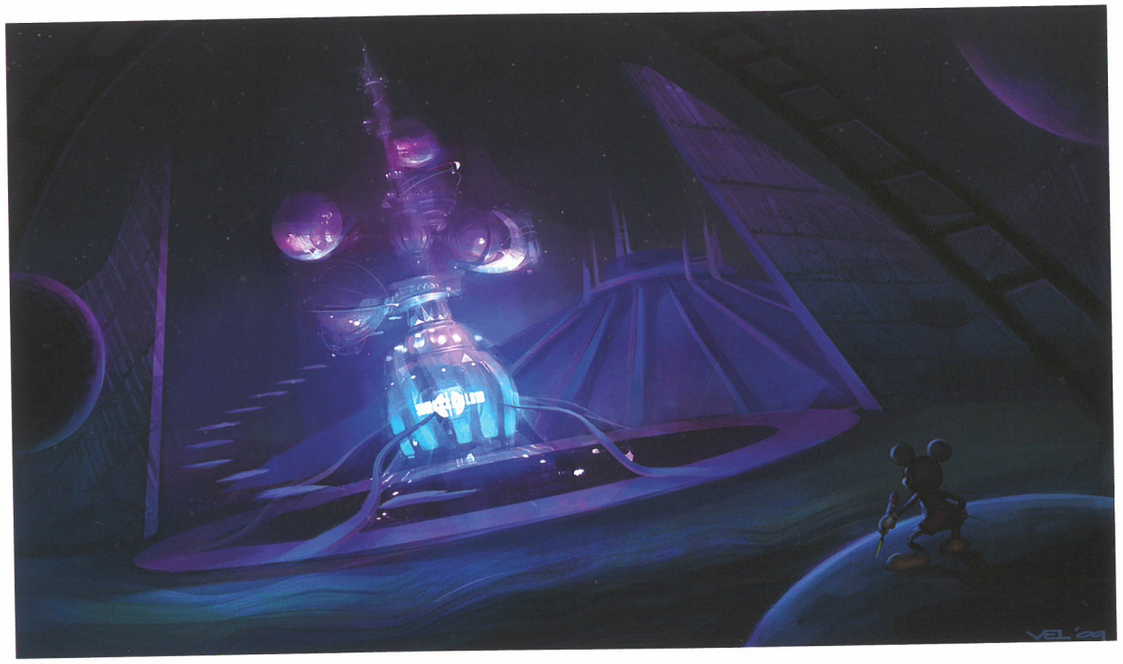
—Warren Spector

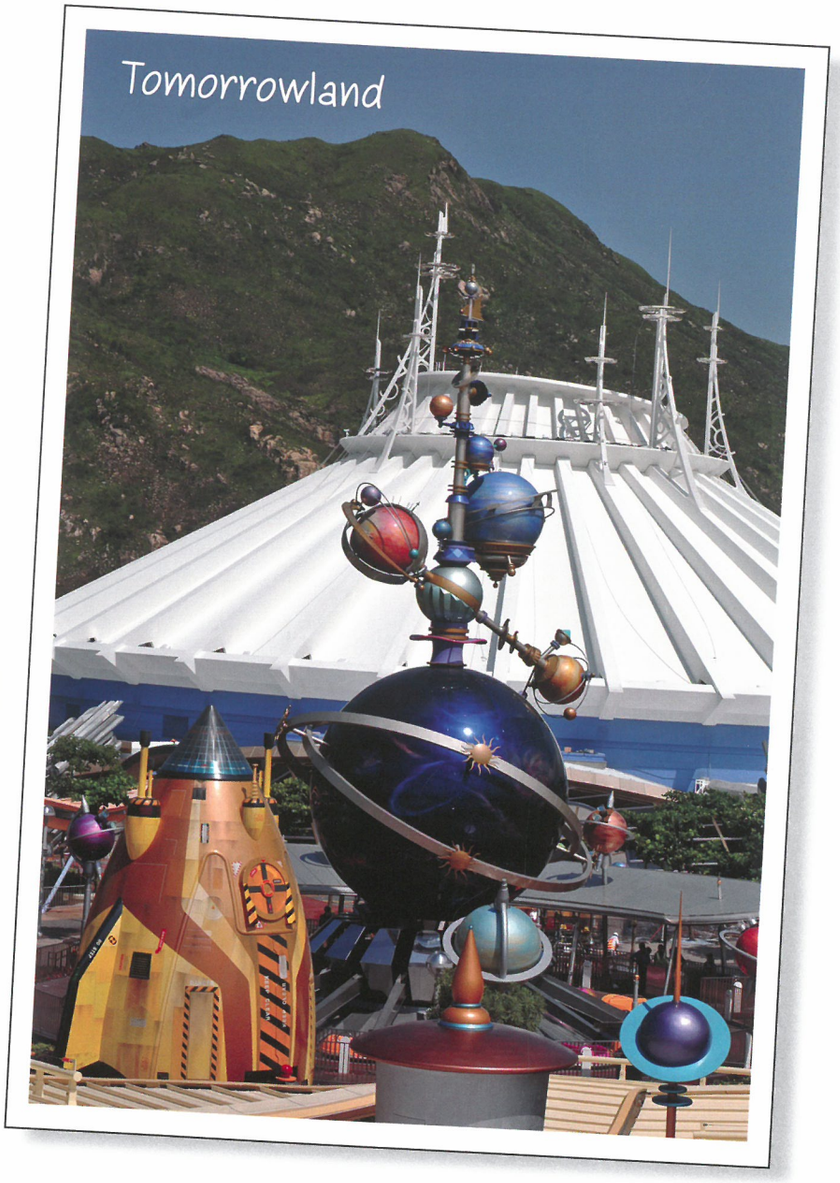



Tomorrow
City









Disneyland's Tomorrowland first opened in 1955, to showcase Disney's vision of the far future of 1986, a year chosen to coincide with the next return of Halley's Comet. It's a beautiful, utopian vision of what the future would be like, with a distinctive style—a world with space flight, automated homes, robots, and pristine white buildings with dramatic architectural flourishes.

Tomorrow City is a joyous combination of all of Disney's imagined futures, from Jules Verne to *Tron* and beyond. While you're trying to reach and repair the Moonliner Rocket, you travel through a kind of timeline of Disney science fiction.

ABOVE: The futuristic look of Tomorrowland captured in a Tomorrow City concept piece.

OPPOSITE: Stylized rocket, Space Mountain and people mover track – all the essential ingredients of Wasteland's Tomorrow City are captured here. As depicted here, this is a land of hope and loss, as it should be.

—Warren Spector

ABOVE: As always, real world reference was critically important to us. We needed players to feel like they were visiting a twisted version of a place they knew well. —WS



The Nautilus started out as a simple visual prop that I stuck in an early level block-out to fill some space. As I started researching it, there was just so much cool history and reference for the 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea attraction that the role of the Nautilus grew and grew to be a major part of the entire Tomorrow City level, even serving as a transportation device for the player. This is a great example of how an art element ended up influencing the gameplay in a major way.

—Jonathan Price,
Senior Artist/Environment

It begins with an image from Jules Verne's *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*, the famous *Nautilus* submarine (or here, the Notilus). Its retro-futuristic outline is familiar both from the film and the much-mourned Submarine Voyage ride at Disneyland, which was dismantled in 1998, after which it was consigned to Wasteland. Mickey raises the *Notilus* from the depths, in a pillared, greenish chamber whose architecture is inspired by Disney's 2001 film *Atlantis: The Lost Empire*.

LEFT: Mickey in a chamber inspired by *Atlantis: The Lost Empire.*



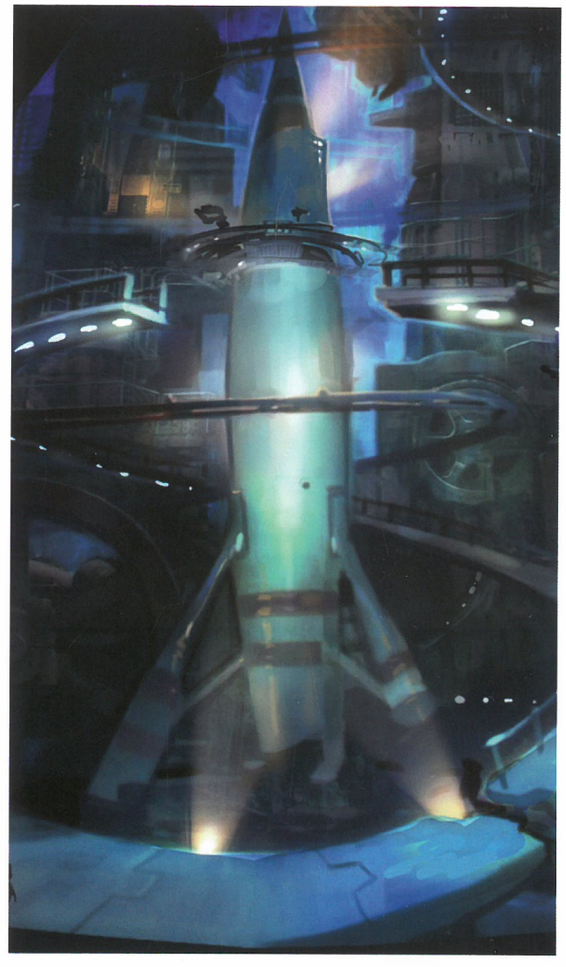
The Lagoon area takes its color cues from *Tron*, and its sweeping curved architectural style of Tomorrowland. Out in the thinner ocean, you can spot a floating flying saucer—a remnant of the Flying Saucers that once stood in Disneyland, closed in 1967 and replaced by the Tomorrowland Stage. The Monorail system looms overhead, and you even exit the level by a version of the old Carousel of Progress attraction from Walt Disney World.

The multileveled Tomorrow Square combines features from the Tomorrowland PeopleMover and the Rocket Jets ride, with the *Tron* aesthetic—glowing blue tiles and accents.

The Moonliner Rocket, once the tallest feature at Disneyland, dominates the Space Voyage level, with Space Mountain itself swirling up in the background.

The final confrontation is set on the peak of Space Mountain itself, and pits Mickey against Petetronic—a Pete version of the villain Sark from *Tron*.





ABOVE: From the first days of concept development, we knew the Moonliner Rocket would play a huge role in the game. This image captures its grandeur and importance.

LEFT: Petetronic, one of the game's boss battles. This image captures the look and the fast-paced action critical to that battle's gameplay and overall feel.

—Warren Spector



Ventureland

It was fun to watch the team bring Ventureland to life. The environments combine the most memorable moments from Never Land and Tortuga, a childhood dream come true.

—**Jason Moulton,** *Lead Artist/Environment*





ABOVE: Capturing the drama of Mickey's big boss encounter with Wasteland's unique version of Captain Hook was critical. This image provided terrific inspiration for the design team.

LEFT: Wasteland's Ventureland was an amalgam of the Pirates of the Caribbean ride and *Peter Pan*. We had to go to the original source material—the film and the park—for reference.

BELOW LEFT: Hook's ship, Skull Mountain and the thinner ocean, site of Hook's toon-to-animatronic conversion experiments.

OPPOSITE TOP AND BOTTOM: Pirates of the Caribbean's Tortuga, re-created in Wasteland.

—Warren Spector

All of Disney's piratical leftovers ended up in the same place, a tropical island that jumbles together features of Peter Pan's Never Land, the Pirates of the Caribbean theme park ride, and more—anything with a taste of adventure that fell into Wasteland came here. Ventureland is a lush jungle area, in a nice contrast with the stone and metal of Tomorrow City.



Mickey arrives to find himself in the middle of a war. Peter Pan, Wendy, and the Lost Boys are absent. An animatronic Captain Hook—another brilliantly gruesome transformation of the source image—was thrown in with the Blot. He's made of metal and plastic, and has nothing to lose if the thinner rises and the world is drained of paint. He's transforming cartoon pirates into animatronics, and it's pirate civil war—cartoons versus machines! The cartoon pirates, led by Smee, stand against Captain Hook, and Mickey joins them.

Visually, colonial Caribbean architecture mingles with J. M. Barrie's imagination. Piratical Tortuga contains precise sections of the Pirates theme park ride (the well design, for example, is an exact match), but it sits hard by the skull-shaped rock, Hangman's Tree, and the Indian Village. Even the captain's ship is a hybrid of the *Jolly Roger* and the *Black Pearl* of the *Pirates of the Caribbean* films. Alert players will spot pieces of the Jungle Cruise ride's entranceway from Disneyland, the Enchanted Tiki Hut, fragments of the *Jungle Book* films, even the Swiss Family Robinson.









Animatronic Daisy is by far my favorite character. She still holds true to the real Daisy's beautiful self, even as an animatronic, and she knows it! The animators did a great job capturing Daisy and making her come to life.

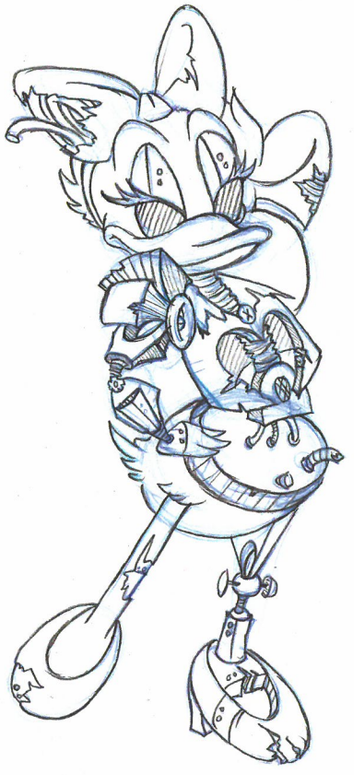
—Mark Stefanowicz,
Studio Art Director

Animatronic Daisy Duck

Daisy Duck first appeared in the 1940 short

Mr. Duck Steps Out and brought some much-needed romance into Donald Duck's life. She and Donald share both a species and a hot temper.

Like the other animatronic pals, Daisy was put together out of spare parts as a friend for Oswald the Lucky Rabbit. Patched together as she is, she and animatronic Donald still have a romantic connection.



THIS SPREAD: Like all the animatronic pals, Daisy went through many incarnations. The version shown opposite was deemed too serious and potentially frightening.

ABOVE: The final version of Daisy, seen here in a 2D cinematic, was a perfect balance of the real cartoon character's innate appeal and the creepiness of cobbled together animatronics.

—Warren Spector



Mickey in Wonderland

ABOVE: The Alice in Wonderland inspired land was cut from the game (though who knows what the future holds?). This image shows how compelling that land could have been.

—Warren Spector

An area based on Disney's *Alice in Wonderland* was proposed. It was to be a land ruled by the Red Queen and opposed by the Mad Hatter, the White Rabbit, and the Cheshire Cat. Sadly, it was never attempted due to time constraints, but the idea survives in concept art by Jordan Lamarre-Wan. Fortunately, the Red Queen's card soldiers do turn up throughout the game.

Bog Easy



Bog Easy combines all of Disney's views of New

Orleans, a city whose culture, history, and architecture can be found all over the Disney oeuvre. Concept artists, particularly Jordan Lamarre-Wan, pored over the design of New Orleans Square in Disneyland, picking out tiny perfect details, like the ornate railings along the balconies, the Spanish moss, even the design of the fencing, alternating square stone posts with wrought iron. The pink-and-white exteriors and a curving staircase disappearing into the upper story of a courtyard, like the other touches, evoke the source material.

There were other sources, like the haunting atmosphere of that first stage of Pirates of the Caribbean: the yellow-orange glow of a lantern on the porch of a lonely shack far out in the swamps; rotting piers and ramshackle planking slowly disintegrating into greenish bayou water. The horizon of midnight blue sky shading to white, bright stars and the dark trunks of cypress trees dripping moss forms the perfect backdrop.

The fireflies and strings of bright hanging lanterns come from the 2009 film *The Princess and the Frog* and from the Blue Bayou restaurant hidden inside the Pirates of the Caribbean ride. The half-sunken steamboat is the one seen in *The Rescuers*.

Bog Easy lent itself to a mood of mystery where trees recede into the distance and are silhouetted by backlighting. Working with an environment submerged in thinner gave us the opportunity to introduce sunken visual elements such as the boat from *The Rescuers* and populating them with the ghosts from the "Lonesome Ghosts" short.

—**Jordan Lamarre-Wan,**
Associate Concept Artist



LEFT: The foggy, haunted feel of the Pirates of the Caribbean ride perfectly captured by concept art for Bog Easy. —WS


The
Lonesome
Manor



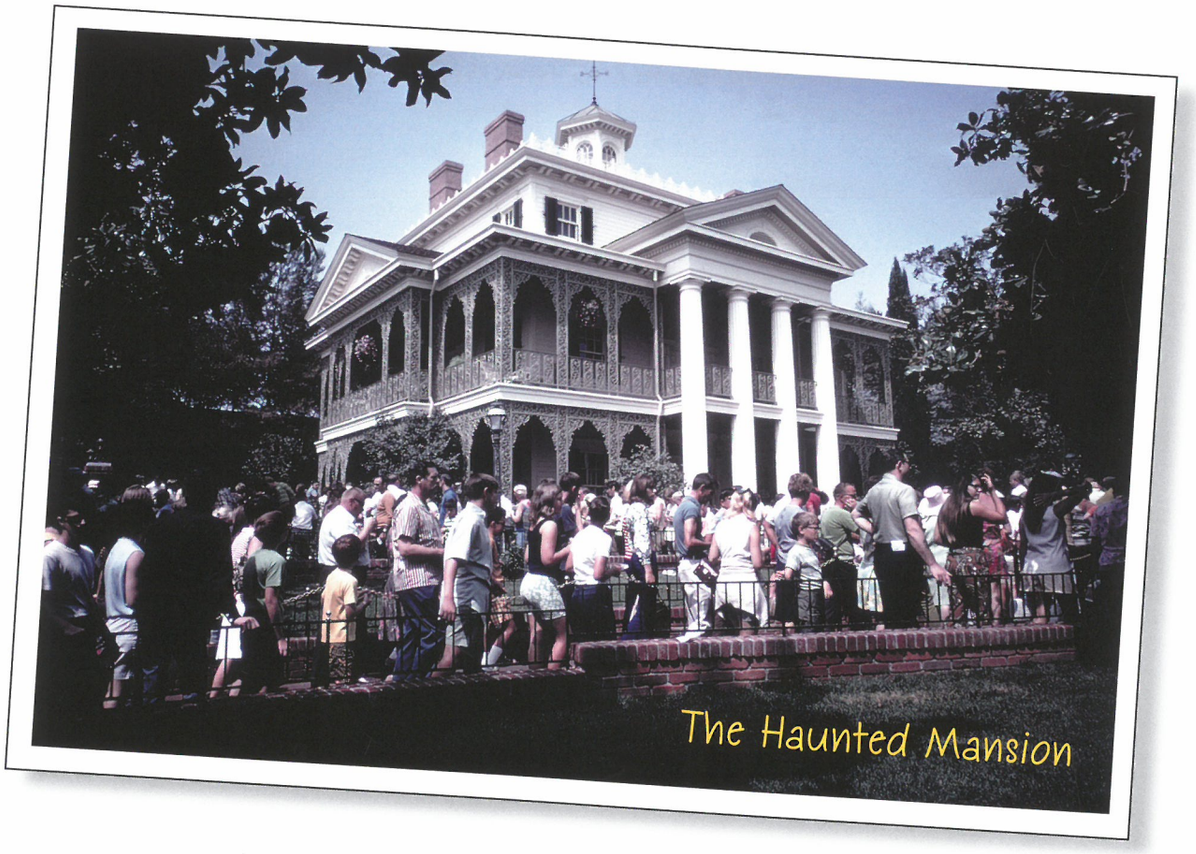
This is one of my favorite pieces. It really shows how close we came to matching the concept art. The lighting in this piece really brings out the dark mood we were trying to portray.

—**Mark Stefanowicz,**
Studio Art Director









ABOVE LEFT: A frightened Gus hides under our hero, Mickey, in the presence of Lonesome Manor, an amalgam of elements from all the Haunted Mansions from around the world.

ABOVE: One version of The Haunted Mansion, but each park has its own version, with its own look and even, in some cases, telling its own story.

—Warren Spector

The Haunted Mansion is probably the most beloved of Disney park connoisseurs, for its combination of Gothic horror, camp, and unfettered imagination. The details vary from park to park, but wherever it is, it's the quintessential haunted house—pure, atmospheric, macabre glee.

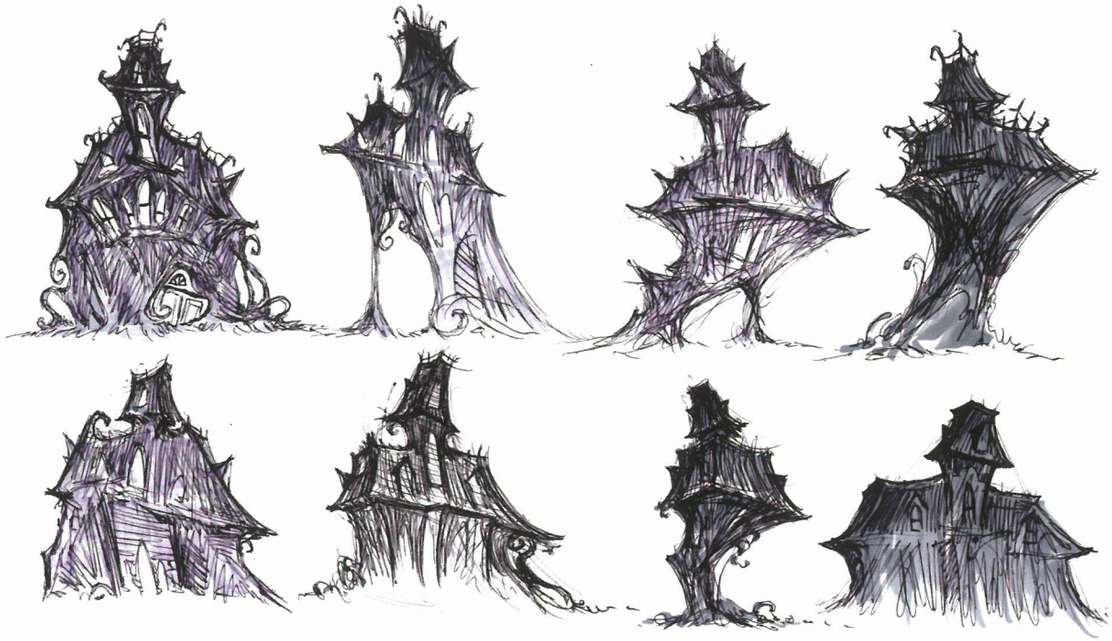
Of all the Disney rides, it probably needed the least tweaking to fit into a Wasteland context. The atmosphere and style already fit perfectly, and the ghosts' innate wish to torment trespassers translates perfectly naturally to Wasteland's hostility.



ABOVE: Here the combination of elements from the different park versions of The Haunted Mansion can be clearly seen.

—Warren Spector

From the outside, Wasteland's Lonesome Manor is a jumble of architectural styles, pieces of each park's haunted house all thrown together into an enormous, jumbled mansion: the distinctive white columns from Disneyland's Southern plantation–style house off New Orleans Square; peaks and towers from Walt Disney World's brick Gothic Revival hulk off Liberty Square; the tower window from Disneyland Paris's Phantom Manor, built in a Second Empire style.





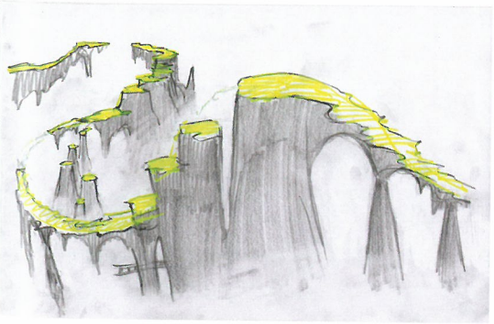
ABOVE LEFT: Silhouette investigation was vitally important. Making Lonesome Manor instantly familiar and recognizable without slavishly copying The Haunted Mansion was the team's mandate.

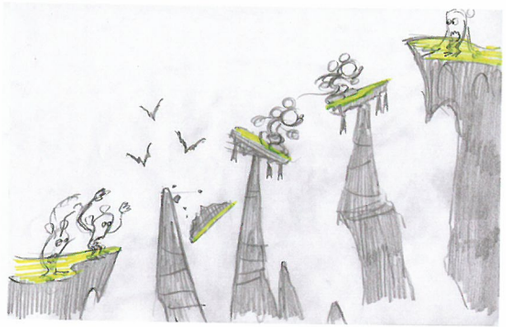
ABOVE: The combination of The Haunted Mansion elements started coming together here, along with elements that would be painted and inert.

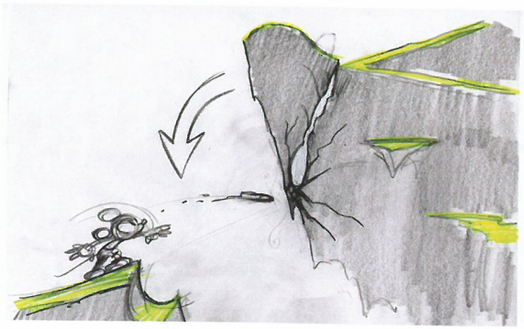
BELOW: The concept artists worked closely with the design team to test out gameplay ideas (in this case a platforming and painting challenge) before building things in-game at great expense.

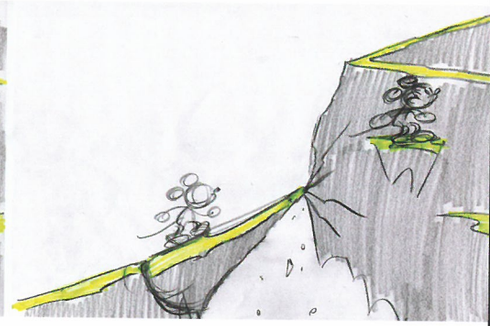
—WS

The mansion interior is designed as an amusement park ride, but like everything Oswald built, it's only a loose take on the original—it has decayed and corroded, and as Mickey you end up hopping on and off the tracks, getting through as much by your wits as by design. The design team wanted to deliver the feeling of being in the original ride, with the added thrill of being able to interact with everything, and step behind the scenes.











ABOVE: The Haunted Mansion all but required that we include iconic elements of that ride in our game version. Here is the familiar and well-loved stretching room that begins a visitor's journey to The Haunted Mansion.

RIGHT: The ballroom is another fan favorite in The Haunted Mansion. The pipe organ is a relatively small element of the real ride but we decided to turn it into a centerpiece of our version.

OPPOSITE: We had to include a library come to life and an appearance by a Wasteland version of Madame Leota, whose head floats ethereally in a crystal ball.

—Warren Spector

Inside, the houses combine many of Disney's supernatural imaginings. The classic animation *Lonesome Ghosts* (1937) was a major inspiration. There are familiar sights from The Haunted Mansion—the ballroom, the library, and of course the stretching room with its slowly transforming paintings, everything built in a colossal, grand, and luxurious style. The pipe organ has grown and animated. Madame Leota, the oracular head inside its crystal ball, has come to life.











ABOVE: Early versions included an extensive graveyard adventure, full of twisted trees and mausoleums—it was only cut for scheduling reasons.

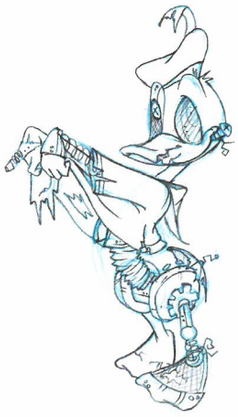
LEFT: The image that finally, fully nailed the look and feel of Lonesome Manor. Few concept pieces were more important to us in establishing the game's look and feel or in convincing people inside Disney and out, that a Mickey Mouse game didn't have to be exclusively for kids.

RIGHT: This is the back of Lonesome Manor. In an early version of the design players would have to scale the back wall, using paint and thinner to reveal a path that isn't instantly apparent.

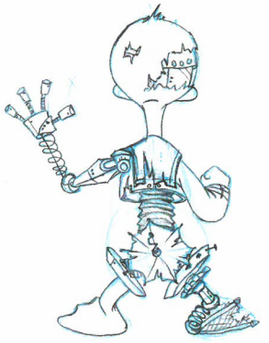
—Warren Spector

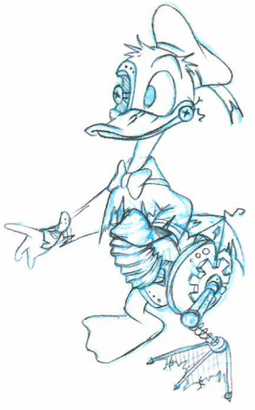












Animatronic Donald Duck

Donald, of course, is Mickey's most famous costar.

He was introduced in 1934 and soon afterward appeared in *The Band Concert* (1935), arguably still the greatest cartoon short ever produced. He has remained virtually the same ever since—same attitude, same look, and the same sailor costume.

Until now, anyway. The concept art for Donald was a disturbing tour de force, a stitched-up, decaying Donald with a nail in his head and an elephant's trunk for one arm. Thankfully, the final, in-game Donald was only slightly toned down.

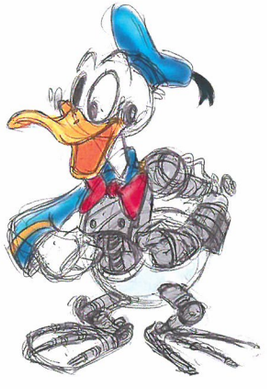
One of our animators came up with a wonderfully funny animation for "possessed" Donald. Through various revisions this animation ended up in the final 2D cinematic.

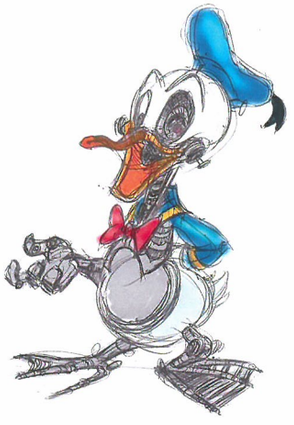
—**Jorma Auburn,**
Lead Artist/Animation

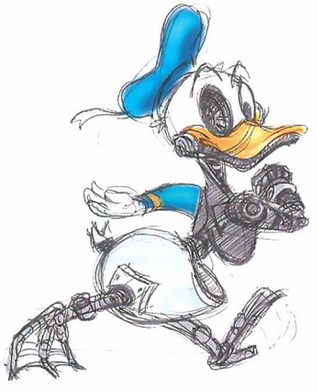
THIS PAGE: A variety of images show how varied our attempts were to capture the essence of an animatronic Donald. We went over-the-top serious and scary and conventionally fun and funny. Eventually, we settled on a balanced funny/creepy concept, seen at top left, that, really captured Donald's personality.

OPPOSITE: Even in animatronic form, Donald Duck is the hothead of the gang!

—Warren Spector

















The Mad Doctor

The Mad Doctor originated in a brilliant animated short of the same name, released in 1933. Like the Blot, he has no known origin or motives, other than to perform some gruesome experiment. In his debut, he kidnaps Pluto with the idea of transplanting the dog's head onto a chicken's body. The Mad Doctor appeared again in the 1995 short *The Runaway Brain*, but clearly he spends most of his time among the forgotten cartoons, in Wasteland.

THIS PAGE: Every game needs villains and the Disney animators gave us a great one in the Mad Doctor. We did our own concepts, to flesh out what we knew of the character, but really the job was to capture the look and spirit of the original in 3D form.

Here, though, we see the Mad Doctor's story in fuller form. After he fell into Wasteland, he and Oswald set about building their own version of the Magic Kingdom. To this end, he put his strange ingenuity to work and created the Beetleworx, his ubiquitous servants.

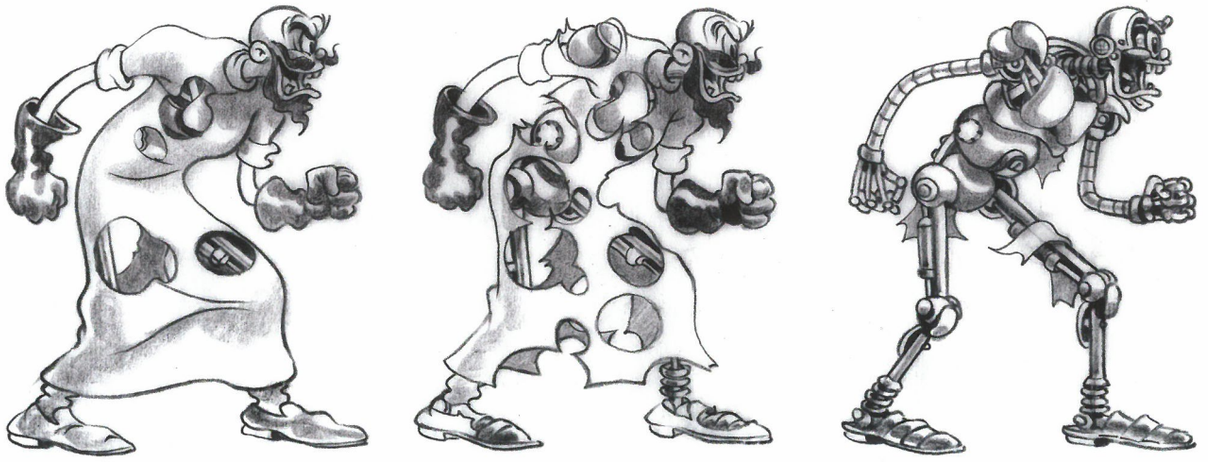


OPPOSITE: "Why do I do it? Because I'm *mad* of course!" The Mad Doctor revealing the details of his plan (as villains always do!) in one of the game's 2D cinematic sequences.

—Warren Spector







THIS PAGE: The Mad Doctor is part toon and part animatronic. We had to know what he looked like "under the skin."

OPPOSITE: This image blew us all away. The Mad Doctor makes his first appearance during the game in a rocket-powered snow globe. Who wouldn't want a rocket-powered snow globe?!

—Warren Spector

When the Blot appeared on the scene, and the thinner spill happened, the Mad Doctor changed sides. He knew the Blot would be more powerful, and he knew one of Wasteland's greatest secrets—that to escape and survive, one needed the heart of a true cartoon character. Naturally, the Mad Doctor's mind runs to the idea of vivisection, and he is the real architect of the Blot's plan to steal Mickey's heart.

The early concept art by Carson Van Osten conveys all the gangly, hunched, mustachioed menace of the original short. As he fights, we learn the Mad Doctor has two forms, cartoon and metal. Like his creations the Beetleworx, he's an animatronic robot masquerading as a cartoon.



The Mad Doctor is such a great villain. His personality in the original cartoon was so scary and obsessive, but with a bit of awkwardness. I tried to play up his clumsy side to balance out the scary side, and make him super fun to battle. He was my favorite character to animate.

—**John Ford,** *Senior Animator*

Dark Beauty Castle





My whole body aches when I look at this. Whatever is attached to the other end of that root-claw-arm thing that's holding up the castle can't be good.

—**Stacey Moore,** *Senior Animator*





Dark Beauty Castle is Wasteland's answer

to the Sleeping Beauty Castle in Disneyland. Of course, the Disney oeuvre is full of fairy-tale castles, their looks inspired by romantic 19th-century creations like Neuschwanstein Castle in Bavaria, with Gothic ornaments and soaring delicate towers. The castle is often used as Disney's logo, almost as recognizable as Mickey himself, so naturally, Wasteland has to have one to match.

ABOVE LEFT: Inspired by the spiral staircase in some versions of the castle at the Disney parks, the Mad Doctor's workshop atop the castle's central tower is foreboding, "Disney-ish" and a fitting introduction to Wasteland.

ABOVE RIGHT: Once, Dark Beauty Castle looked a lot like the real thing from the parks. Our version had to resemble it closely enough that players would feel a sense of loss at its current state and want to restore it to its former glory.

OPPOSITE: A critically important image, this was a little *too* dark for the final tone of the game, but it was one of the first concepts that captured the twisted darkness of post-thinner disaster Wasteland and perhaps the very first that showed us the "rightness" of having our lands perched precariously atop strands of inert material.

—Warren Spector





ABOVE: A refinement of our Dark Beauty Castle look that captured the right combination of darkness and light, painted and inert, beauty and desolation. Dark Beauty Castle didn't end up looking much like this concept piece, but the entire world ended up being inspired by it. —WS

Dark Beauty Castle is a perfect emblem for Wasteland. It has all the whimsical charm of Sleeping Beauty's, and once it was almost as beautiful. It was Oswald and Ortensia's happy-ending castle, the place where even in Wasteland they had found happiness.

By the time Mickey arrives, it's been redone in the more menacing style of Maleficent's fortress. The thinner disaster changed it forever—the light-blue-and-pink exterior was burned away, leaving darker and heavier stone, purple and acid green lighting. It's more dungeon and prison than happy-ending castle. Its scars and patches are a record of what it once was, and the change it suffered.

ABOVE: Oswald's beloved Ortensia makes one of her rare appearances, pictured in stained glass.

OPPOSITE: The penultimate mission in *Disney Epic Mickey* is a mad scramble to the top of Dark Beauty Castle. We needed to know how the place would look from high in the air. These concept pieces helped us get a handle on that.

—Warren Spector

Like Mickeyjunk Mountain and Mean Street, Dark Beauty Castle was one of the most extensively drawn and redrawn images throughout the preproduction phase. Although the castle design does owe a great deal to the original Sleeping Beauty, artists used a few details from *Beauty and the Beast*, such as in the design of the gargoyles. And a few fragments of the haunted-castle sequence from *The Mad Doctor* also peek in here and there.













ABOVE: The player interacts with Blotlings and the Shadow Blot throughout but, as the adventure reaches its rousing conclusion, we needed to portray the full might of the "real" Blot unleashed. The size and power of the creature are on full display here.

RIGHT: Defeating the enormous Blot isn't just a question of kicking him in the big toe—Mickey has to platform his way to the top of the castle as the Blot brings it down all around him.

OPPOSITE: The true form of the Blot isn't just big, it's enormous, deadly, uncaring, inhuman—a force of nature. This concept captures the solid/liquid/gaseous deadliness of the Blot to a tee. How's a little mouse, even one with paint and thinner, supposed to deal with *that*?

—Warren Spector





The Blot Interior





Mickey's heart was something that took careful handling to represent. Finding the balance of making a heart that wasn't too cute or too gruesome was a challenge for the entire art team, but they pulled it off brilliantly.

—**Mark Stefanowicz,**
Studio Art Director

Inside, the Phantom Blot is a strange, terrifying

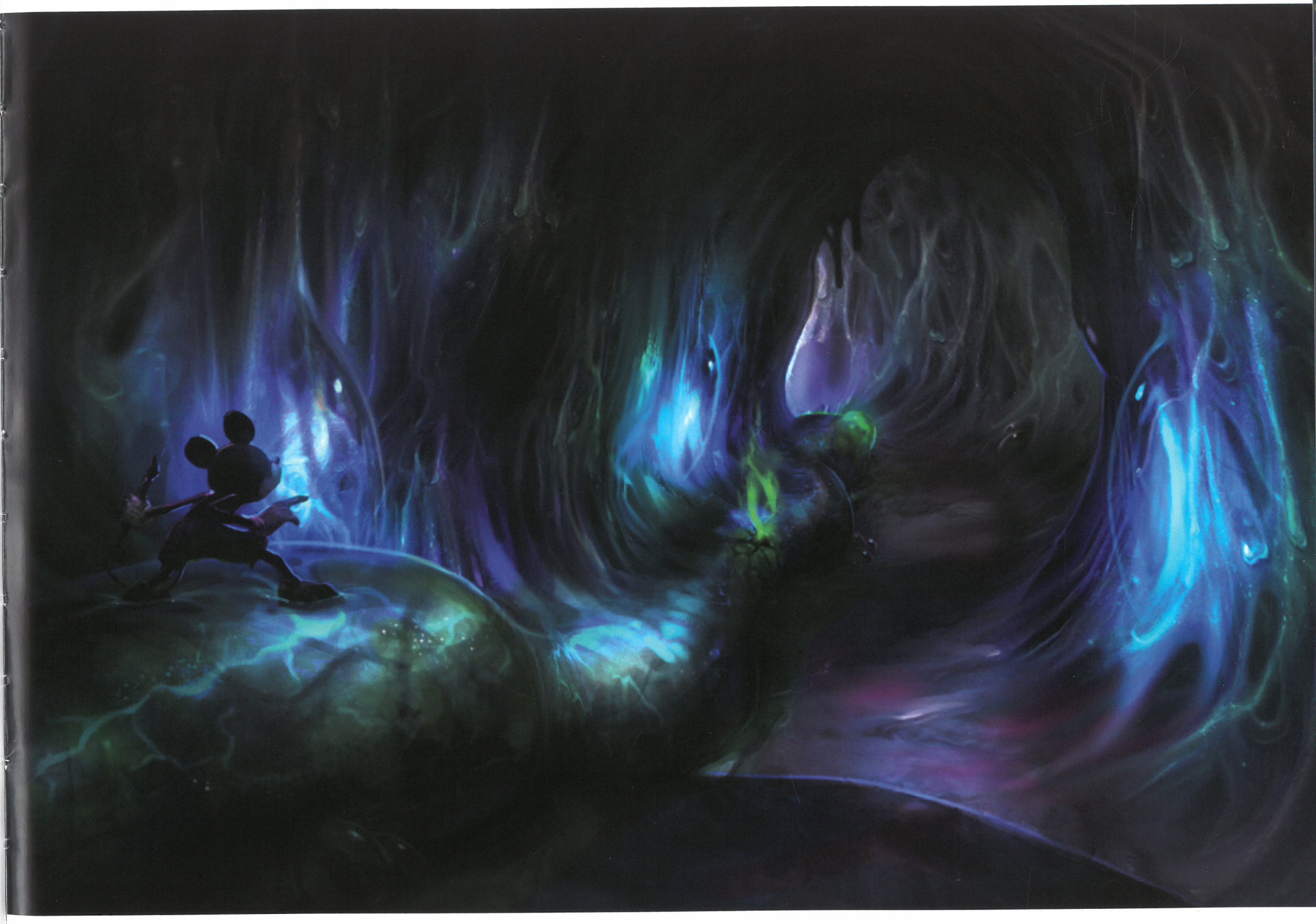
biomorphic labyrinth. By the game's end, the Blot has extended its tentacles all over Wasteland to leech away precious paint, and it has swollen to the size of a storm cloud. Mickey and Oswald leap from the highest tower of Dark Beauty Castle into the Blot to search for Mickey's heart.

OPPOSITE: What does the inside of a Blot look like? It's a creature made of paint, thinner and corruption, brought to life by magic. How to visualize that? There was a bit of inspiration drawn from the final stages of an earlier game, System Shock, where Shodan, a sentient AI, takes over a space station, but we wanted a much more organic feel than that—more organic than anything else in the *Disney Epic Mickey* game. The end result was deliciously disturbing.

—Warren Spector

For the look, artists drew equally on H. R. Giger, *The Little Mermaid*, *Fantasia*, and *Sleeping Beauty* to create a dark, desperate mood for the final confrontation between bravery and fear, selfishness and heroism.

In the game's final moments, Oswald discovers Mickey's stolen heart. He has the option of keeping it for himself and leaving Wasteland, or returning it to Mickey—the one person he has spent his life hating. It's the moment where the game's basic questions, about what makes a real cartoon character and a real hero, get answered.

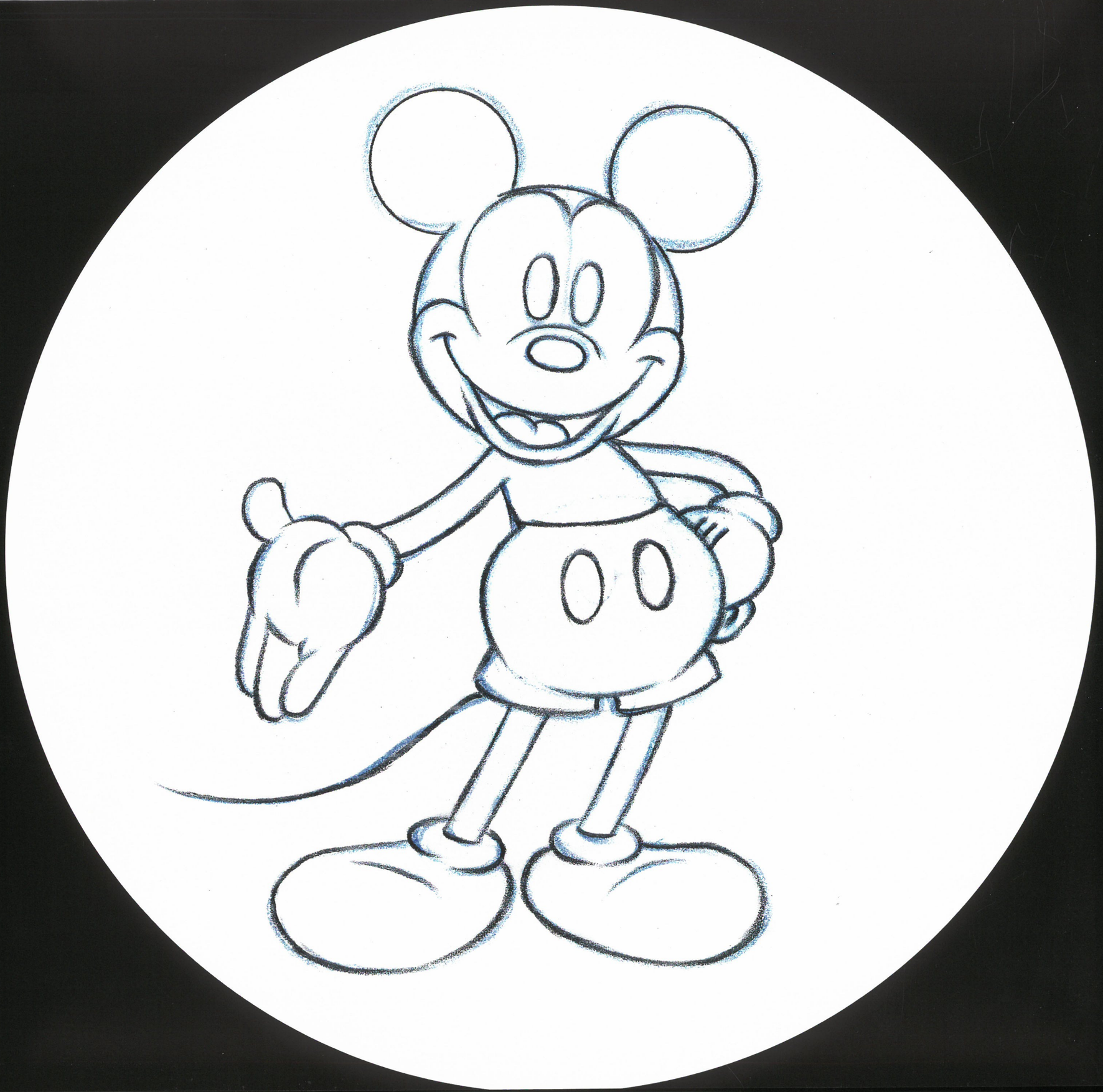




I wanted to show the Storm Blot's interior as an organic place where Blotlings were incubating, waiting to be released on Wasteland. Sadly, this did not make it into the game. "One has awoken!"

—**Shawn Melchor,** *Associate Concept Artist*





Afterword

DISNEY EPIC MICKEY BEGAN as an experiment. Disney Interactive Studios brought in a group of interns one day and asked them if they could think of an idea for a Mickey Mouse game that people their age would want to play. The very first thing they decided was that Mickey would have to be a character that did not remind them of Mickey Mouse shows and products aimed at younger children.

This led the original teams to bring me in as a consultant to provide some historical reference and sketches. Me and Mickey go back a ways. I started drawing Mickey in the 1970s, working with many of the artists who had directly worked for Walt Disney at the beginning of their careers. I'm an old dog, but I always look for opportunities to learn some new tricks.

The experiment came to an end; the project was put on the shelf for a while but was restarted by new management who then turned it over to Junction Point under the brilliant direction of Warren Spector. They had seen my sketches in the file and, fortunately for me, asked me to do some more work and join an advisory board for the project.

I really enjoyed working with the young artists on the early stages of what would become *Disney Epic Mickey*. The enthusiasm they brought to the project comes shining through in every aspect of the game and the mountain of art that was developed for it.

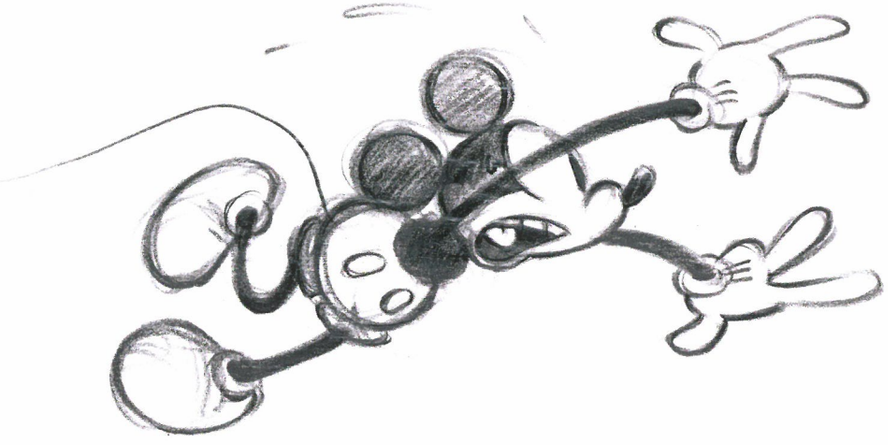
From the very beginning, I wanted the game developers to know that Mickey's model had been redesigned before over the decades and I went through the major changes that were made under the supervision of Walt Disney himself. In the first black-and-white cartoons Mickey was made of circles with tubular arms and legs and boxy feet. The animators called this the "rubber hose" period because that's what the arms and legs were supposed to look like. Jack Kinney, who directed many of the Mickey shorts, told me that they used to trace quarters and dimes to save time drawing his head, body, and ears.

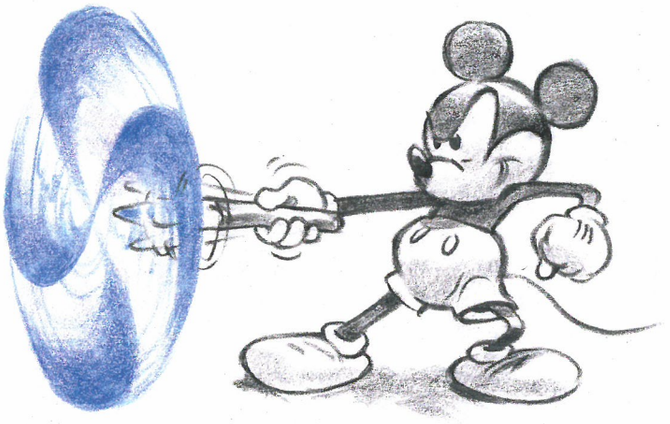
Walt started making color cartoons in 1934 and, at first, Mickey stayed pretty much the same (with the addition of the red shorts and various simple costumes). In the late 1930s, Walt asked Freddie Moore to redesign Mickey with separate eyeballs and to add some tone to his face, to better allow for a broader range of expressions. Mickey's design changed again in the late '40s and '50s. That generation had lived through the Great Depression and World War II, and they wanted to put the past behind them. Modern art and architecture, as well as a general feel of futurism, influenced everything in American society, so Mickey and other Disney characters became more stylized and streamlined.

For *Disney Epic Mickey*, we wanted to get back to basic core concepts of Mickey Mouse. The first sketches I did were intended to show that some variation of a rubber-hose Mickey

could stretch enough to create the extreme animation needed for a game character. I also tried to make sketches showing a determined, "mouse-of-action" attitude. If you study his classic cartoons and include comic strip and comic book stories, you find that Mickey gets involved in all kinds of hairy situations and adventures. Audiences of all ages loved to see the little guy come out on top, and this approach seemed perfect for the game.

The basic story of the game was laid out pretty early in the project. Mickey would be transported to an alternate universe where discarded or distorted ideas and characters (including a very jealous Oswald the Lucky Rabbit) existed. Everything there was made out of ink and paint that Mickey could erase with thinner or re-create with his paintbrush. When Junction Point took over, they raised the bar from a low hurdle to a pole vault. They mapped out the entire "Wasteland," based on Disneyland and the other theme parks, and pushed ideas further and further using production design, illustration, and effects that would dazzle the most sophisticated game player.



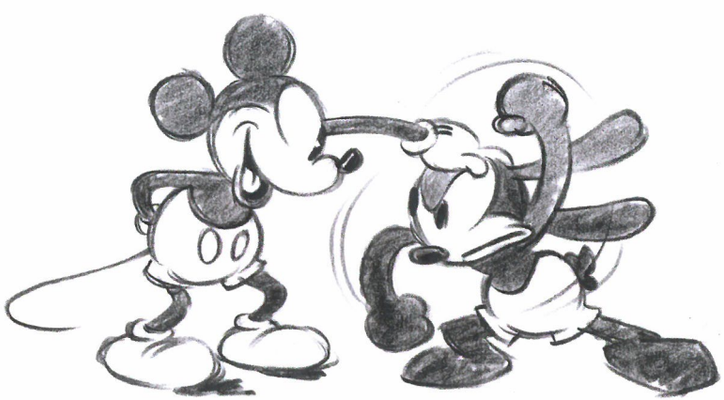


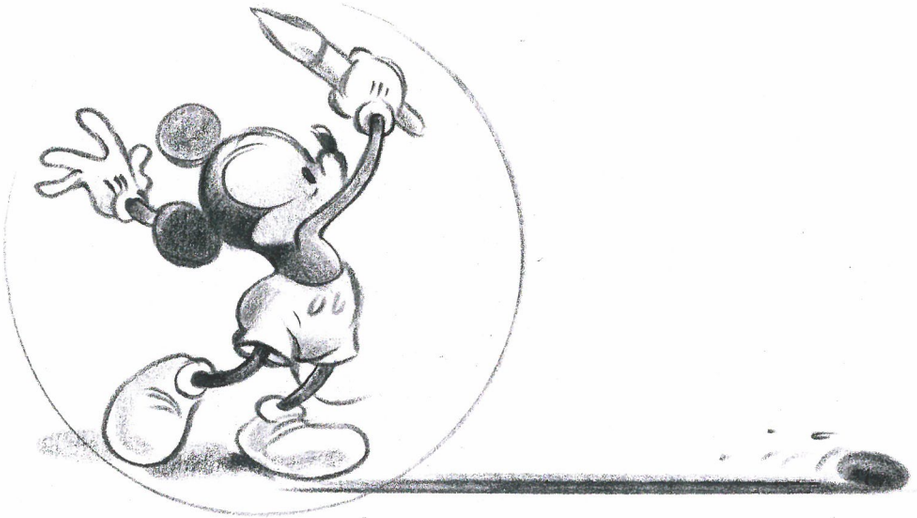
During this phase I made some sketches that the character animators could use for reference. The first decision they had to make was how to animate Mickey's head turning. This is a more complicated process than it initially sounds. In 1928, when Mickey was designed, most animators had previously worked as illustrators. They would draw a front view differently from a side view because each single image looked best when presented in its own way. For instance, in profile, Mickey's nose is vertical, in a front view it's horizontal. If it were vertical from the front it would cover up most of his eyes. Another example is his ears. Realistically, turning the ears makes no sense at all. If they are circles when seen from the front, then you should see a vertical edge when they turn to the side. Just imagine holding a Mickey Mouse Club hat and turning it to the side. When drawn, however, it *looks* better if both ears are circles from every angle! Mickey was animated this way in all the hand-drawn films, and it looked just fine. The brain has no trouble translating the illusion of the motion that takes place even though it defies logic. There is some cheating going on when you draw Mickey's facial expressions from different

angles too. To bring this approach to the game, I drew many pages of expressions and head turns and I was very happy when it was decided that Mickey would be digitally animated in a manner consistent with his early animated appearances even though it would be much more challenging.

All of my sketches were done in a loose classic Mickey style so they could work as a starting point or as building blocks that would be finalized by the game designers. I thought if you wanted to design a new Porsche Carrera you really needed to know what the Porsche 911 looked like first. All of the credit goes to the talented young digital animators who worked on the game. They really made Mickey come to life, and they made sure it would be fun for the player to guide Mickey all around the screen, running and jumping and conquering every obstacle that comes his way thanks to their expertise.

There is part of the early game concept that I think of as an "in joke." Wasteland was an underworld of discarded concepts or designs that went wrong. The impression that I got from the old-school artists and writers at the studio, however, was that Walt Disney hardly ever threw out a good

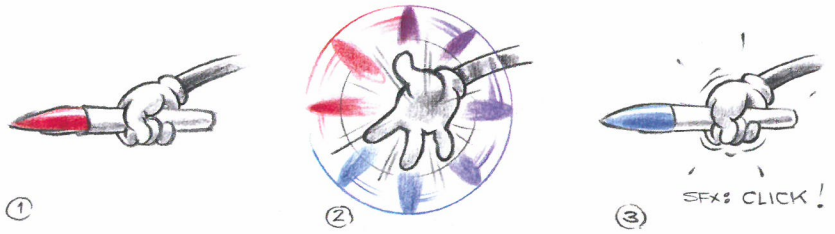




idea. He seemed to remember everything. In a story or production meeting he would often tell the group to go back and take a look at artwork that had been done for an earlier project. If he saw sketches or concepts he liked, he would have copies printed and circulated around the studio as "rough suggestions" for inspiration. Repurposing his early work, which he considered timeless, was a fundamental part of his long-term strategy. The animated cartoons and live-action films were used as content or starting points for merchandise, publications, records, TV shows, and the theme parks. Disneyland was envisioned as a place where people would feel like they were walking right into a movie. They would be transported back in time or into the future or into a storybook world of cartoon characters.

— *Carson Van Osten*

DISNEY CONCEPT ARTIST



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—*Austin*

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—*Warren*

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